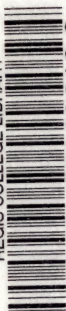


THE INWARD GOSPEL

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THE INWARD GOSPEL

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THE INWARD GOSPEL

FAMILIAR DISCOURSES ORIGINALLY
ADDRESSED TO SOME WHO FOLLOW
THE RULES OF ST. IGNATIUS

BY

WALTER DIVER STRAPPINI, S.J.

AUTHOR OF "MEDITATIONS WITHOUT METHOD"

SECOND AND ENLARGED EDITION

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FOREWORD

THESE familiar discourses are neither studies nor essays. They are somewhat discursive points for meditation, suggesting further thought along their lines.

Originally addressed to a small audience, they hardly appeal to the general reader. But some who were amongst the first audience have thought that the principles set forth in these addresses might be useful to others, whose lives are guided by the Institute of St. Ignatius.

Also, inasmuch as they are but expansions of some points of the inward teaching of Our LORD, they may furnish matter for reflection to any Christian.

W. D. S.

BOURNEMOUTH, 1917.

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“ORDINATA CHARITAS.” WELL-DISCIPLINED CHARITY

Reg. 8th.

CHRISTIAN Charity is not quite the same thing as love. Love it is, but love elevated, spiritualized and generalized. When we use the word love, we mean, most frequently, a very individualized affection which links together those in whom it exists, but is sharply marked off as to others. We have to learn a new meaning, almost a new quality, in the virtue singled out by Our LORD as His favourite amongst the virtues.

It comes before us with especial emphasis. “This is my commandment.” What is it? What is charity as set before us by CHRIST Our LORD?

First of all, let us be clear as to what it is not. It is not that warm natural affection which we feel for our father and mother, the feelings born of those ties of

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nature which bind together the family group. It need not really be a feeling at all. Rather, is it a practical way of dealing with those all about us. In this country, charity has come to be regarded as a synonym for almsgiving ; which it is not. Charity can be shown by the bestowal of money, but the two words are not interchangeable.

We get to know Our LORD's conception when we study the standard of charity which He sets before us. Let us then consider :

The Standard. To explain His special meaning, He tells us that we are to have that "charity" towards others which we have towards ourselves. We have a love of ourselves, of course, yet it is not precisely love. We have no romantic expansion of the heart, prompting us to an impossible altruism as regards our own self. Not that, but in all the varying situations into which life may lead us, to sum it up in a phrase, we invariably wish ourselves well. In our sickness, we want help, sympathy, attention ; when hungry, we want food to be given to us ; when accused, we want

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outspoken defenders. Now this attitude towards ourselves gives the Standard of Christian Charity, most fittingly expressed in a well-known formula, "Do unto others as you would be done by." Conversely, what you would ward off from yourself, never try to fasten on another. Evidently this is not a merely sentimental state; sentiment may, it generally does, enter into charity, still it is an accidental concomitant and not the one material out of which it is built up.

Knowledge as to what a Standard is gives us useful information, but the information does not necessarily spur us on to its acquisition. For action, besides knowledge, we need a Motive.

In the ordinary intercourse of life, our motive for kindness to others is generally their nearness to us, their agreeableness to us, it may be the thought of past or future advantage, but almost always a personal motive. Being personal it is also limited. Now Christian charity is not limited.

The Motive. CHRIST has contrived to make His virtue personal, yet impersonal; definite, but also illimitable. This He

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does by proposing Himself as the one universal motive of charity. "Whatsoever you do to one of my least brethren, you do to *Me*." *He* . . . is the motive. What is done is done directly to Him, indirectly to the recipient of our good offices. Thus it is that our personal motive becomes universal, stretching out till it covers the entire human race ; CHRIST the GOD-MAN is our motive. In every human being we acknowledge the humanity of CHRIST, in our fellow man we feed the hunger of CHRIST, in our fellow man we clothe the nakedness of CHRIST, in our fellow man we visit CHRIST in prison, in redressing his wrongs we redress the wrongs of CHRIST. Before the coming of CHRIST no such universally intelligible motive was possible. Humanity as an abstraction hardly appeals to men, it is too thin and misty: nothing influences us like the personal note. Now CHRIST we know, we know His character, we have read His sayings, we know what were His thoughts, His principles of action. We know how He acted Himself. His forceful personality has stood for centuries before mankind. He, then, is our motive,

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strong, clear, definitely personal, yet also, transcendental. With Him we transcend time and space ; years are as minutes : CHRIST in His representatives stands poor and suffering actually before our eyes, and for love of Him we stretch forth a helping hand. Christian charity is thus practical, not an evaporating sentiment. Christian charity is eminently a virtue for humanity, coextensive with humanity, so flexible as to suit humanity's ever-varying needs, above humanity, independent of it, and quite indestructible.

Knowledge of the Standard and appreciation of the Motive should lead us on to Practice.

Let us think over details. The practical part of charity is loving others as, just as (not necessarily more or less) we love ourselves. There is, of course, an heroic degree, but not all are called to that. But the ordinary practice is for all. Charity does not want sentiment, but it necessitates intelligence, because our love of ourselves is an intelligent care of ourselves. We are thus bound to have an intelligent care of our fellow man. Charity, as a virtue for

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all times and all places and all situations, may make a demand upon our intelligence, for that is free in a way in which sentiment is not free. Then intelligence is, or should be, steady; sentiment, from its very nature, is volatile. My sentiments towards any man may change often, change to any point of the compass, all the while my intelligence will not waver in telling me that, unless I give food to that starving man, he must die. Charity does not bind me to do the (to me, at any rate) impossible. It does not tell me to like the unlikable, which I cannot do ; but it tells me to give food, which I can do easily, my adverse sentiment notwithstanding. Sentiment is useful, but is apt to wear itself out too quickly. Now, CHRIST wanted a steady foundation. Sentiment existed always, CHRIST's virtue is new.

CHRIST's *Charity a New Virtue*

In what way is it new ? It is a new legislation, quite differentiated from the ancient. The old law ran : " You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy.

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But I say to you, love your enemy, and do good to them that hate you" (Matt. v. 43). *I say to you.* A most formal assumption of legislative authority, superseding that of the great lawgiver, Moses: *His* ordination, resting on *His* authority, and so, from this point of view, quite new. It is new also in its breadth of application. Not, as of old, confined and restricted to our immediate neighbourhood; now it is meant to overflow in all directions, and spread abroad without limitations. The human race in its entirety, blotting out distinction of friend or foe, Greek or Gentile, bond or free; mankind, as one indivisible whole, is the subject of this new virtue. Truly a conception divine in its comprehensive simplicity. No merely human mind could think out such unique universality, such a fusing of discordant elements. It is the thought of God for the welfare of man; and if it could be practised in its completeness and ubiquity, it alone would work out all the complicated reforms which suggest themselves piecemeal to worried legislators. Universal, omitting no one single being, yet not unreasonable or

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undiscriminating, lending a helping hand to all, yet with a proviso that this virtue is especially to be exercised towards those who form the household of the Faith. Also, under certain conditions, some men are to be to us, as the heathen, cut off and isolated, not by our withdrawal, but by their inherent, wilful worthlessness. Reasonable discrimination cannot be ignored in practice. The presence of this reasonable element lifts charity above the plane of the weakly sentimental, and gives full play to the activity of our intelligence. Real charity must be intelligent. For how can we treat our neighbour in his varying necessities as he should be treated, unless we fairly understand his necessities, unless we have some power of putting ourselves in his position? To estimate our neighbour's position with anything like correctness, to gauge his wants and his feelings, we must have an intelligent appreciation of what is partly evident, partly hidden from the eye. A person who is considerate must take all these scattered elements into account. This means an intelligent grasp of the things

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which can be furnished, not by emotion only but by mental insight. But is not this mental insight a natural gift, born with the happy possessor, just like musical ability? A natural gift, no doubt, and happy the man for whom nature has thus largely opened her treasure house, and sent into the world so richly dowered. Yet we can all, some of us painfully, acquire much, if not all that such a man finds ready to his hand. By labour in the right direction we can acquire it ; in every case, all must labour in building up our Christian edifice upon the foundation of a natural good quality. Incidentally, let me remark that the supernatural is almost always built upon the natural. Where there is no natural groundwork on which to build, labour is expended in vain. Nature must supply the rough material which Grace works up into her own beautifully finished products. Many failures in the spiritual life, many disappointing endings in an enthusiastically promoted vocation, are due to the ignoring of this inconspicuous but necessary truth.

If we have not been born considerate,

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then we have to be educated into being considerate. This is a work of time ; but, given time and good will, the considerate man who is the product of a well-directed education may not unfrequently surpass the half-trained product of nature. With this training, it is easy to school ourselves in the negative part underlying all charity, that is, to say nothing, and to do nothing that *unnecessarily* wounds our neighbour's feelings. Without necessity. Yes, for at times, his own good, the greater good of others, make it imperative that we should disregard feelings, and take strong action. When Our LORD drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple His action was strong yet He was not uncharitable. He certainly gave pain, but the honour due to God public decency with regard to a place set apart for God's worship, demanded strong action. The individual lacerated feelings of the money-changers could not weigh in the balance. So Christian charity is not namby-pamby, but intelligent, and, if needful, strong in action.

But the motive must always be a supernatural one. It would never be lawful to

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take strong action merely to assuage our own outraged feelings, no matter how great our own provocation, no matter how deep our individual sense of the injury done to God's honour. Nothing simply personal ; but either the service of God, the obedience due to His known will, the lawful exercise of authority ; all these motives may necessitate the *fortiter in re*, which charity may yet be able to carry out *suaviter in modo*.

We may have been told that it is a help to exercise charity towards our fellows, if we try to see God in our neighbour. This sounds excellent advice, except for the fact that the great impediment in this vision is our neighbour himself ! God in our neighbour ! Look at him ! He is too often vulgar, foolish, empty-headed, affected, vain, uneducated, gives himself airs, his talk is foolishness and his presence unendurable. And in him, you ask me to see God ! In him, yes ; but not in his faults or shortcomings. An amateur photograph of our dearest friend, sadly out of focus, badly finished, spotty . . . still it is a kind of likeness—if also a libel, of slender value as

a likeness, yet of some value as a reminder. It has a kind of value because of the one it is meant to shadow forth, though as a work of art! . . . In some such way, our neighbour may well be a dead failure as a slightly representative of God, yet he serves to remind us of Him, of the labour which God has spent on this object, it may be, with such wasted result. The more remote the likeness, the purer the charity. The less we act from any personal attraction to the man himself, the more unalloyed is our Christian charity. So it was that Father Damien saw CHRIST in the lepers he served with such devoted care.

Means to acquire Charity

The person who is born with a meek and yielding disposition, or with too highly developed sentimentality, may often pass for a model of charity. But such characters are not models. Certain forms of kindness to others often come from the desire to spare a pang to oneself. It gives me an unpleasant shock to see anyone hungry; I assuage *my* pang by almsgiving: incidentally, I alleviate another's hunger;

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but my real motive (which I seldom lay bare even to my own sympathetic eye) is the alleviation of the unpleasant jar to my own feelings, produced by a sight out of harmony with my own sentimentality.

The charity of CHRIST was not designed to save me any shock to my sensitive feelings, nor is its object to shed within me the glow emanating from high duty nobly done when I have given away a quite superfluous coin. This sort of thing has nothing in common with what CHRIST calls, "My virtue."

Most of us have to learn His virtue ; some come to school better equipped for learning their lessons than others ; . . . well, this happens in most things that are learnt. Yet intelligent perseverance will make up for most initial disadvantages.

The first lesson is to try to understand the feelings of others. For this end, study your own feelings. Man, of course, differs from man, yet not so much as to be in all things unintelligible to his fellow man. Experience will fill up gaps. But the feelings and emotions which are called into activity within your own self, give you a

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master key which fits most of the locks you are likely to meet with. If you know something of yourself, before long you will know much of other people ; where you are similar as well as wherein you differ. The understanding of others is a large part of charity, whether such understanding is intuitional, or the fruit of patient observation.

Do not accustom yourself to be too critical. Faults are obvious enough, yours included, even when you yourself do not see them. If we always knew how kindly blind others are to our glaring faults, from very shame we should affect as much blindness when the many defects of human qualities in other men are bared before us.

Neither must we be too sensitive. No one of us is above criticism. Was not Our LORD criticized ? Let us content ourselves with not consciously giving legitimate ground for adverse critics to cultivate. Don't jump at conclusions, don't be too acute, don't look keenly straight through brick walls, don't generalize too freely, don't nurse imaginary wrongs — and quickly forget real ones. Don't let your penetrating intellect too easily interpret the

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writing on the wall. After all, the most experienced among us make quite elementary mistakes occasionally. What if I do make occasional mistakes?

Don't be beguiled into actions like these. But here are some of the things a student of CHRIST's charity should do.

Be helpful, but don't fuss about so that every one can see how tremendously helpful you can be. Also, there are many little ways in which you can give up yourself, not necessarily your belongings, which will stimulate the growth of inward charity. All of us have opportunities for thoughtful consideration for others, little misunderstandings we can smooth out of irritating prominence, the soft answer which turns the edge of sharp criticism, the silence which is often kindlier than flowing speech. Then, are we not impressed at times with the much we have to put up with from others? Well, turn round sometimes, and think over what others may, or actually do, put up with from ourselves. Charity was not meant to be one-sided. Yet CHRIST Himself could find small field for the exercise of His charity towards Scribes and

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Pharisees, towards Herod the king, and Judas the betrayer. We shall meet unresponsive objects also, but, at least, our well-meant kindness will reward the giver even if it is wasted on the recipient. But the first field we have to cultivate is that in our immediate neighbourhood.

These thoughts and reflections on our LORD's own virtue are not a treatise, so I will stop here, leaving unsaid so much that is worth saying. But even these reflections may show us how much this virtue can be put in practice ; the virtue He selected, and made clear in its universal application, transcendental in its motive, yet minutely personal. To all human wants it is beautifully adapted, elastic in its exercise, stimulating to the intelligence, reaching down into the well of deep-seated human sympathies. It blesses and perfects the giver more even than the recipient, it trains and moulds all the best qualities of our humanity, till it somewhat resembles the large-hearted God, who makes His sun to shine and His rain to fall for the benefit of the unjust who hunger no less than for the hungry just.

PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICE

Melchisedech, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, for he was a priest of the most high God.—Gen. xiv. 18.

Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech.—Heb. vii. 17.

A TYPE which has been chosen by Almighty GOD Himself must be conspicuously worthy of our attention. A type of priesthood under which Our LORD presents Himself to us, not simply to make clear what manner of priest He was Himself, but also what manner of priest He desires to have in us, emphatically is forced on our attention.

*“ Priest according to the order of
Melchisedech ”*

What is there in this priesthood differentiating it from all other priesthood? Especially from that which loomed so large before the Jewish people? No more certain sign of the passing of the old order

could be given to the Jews than the announcement, that the CHRIST preached by the Apostles was the inaugurator of a new priesthood. He stood forth as the first of a new line of priests, in the presence of which the Jewish was to fade away and become extinguished. This idea was new, almost unthinkable to a Jew, and it may well be that the inspired author of the Epistle to the Hebrews pondered long and was sure of his ground before he wrote down this momentous sentence. Every Christian priest, every Christian must think it over also, as it shadows, in a large outline, what manner of man such a priest must be. In its fullness, applicable to our LORD ; in less measure, it portrays the priest of the new law ; and, with necessary modifications, the individual Christian.

What salient points does the mention of Melchisedech and his priesthood offer for our consideration ?

For our first thought, let us take the contrast shown between the numerous Jewish priesthood and this solitary priest. The Hebrew priest was, if I may use a convenient word, gregarious, one of a

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family, one of a body, one whose lot in life was determined by the accident of birth. He was an official, all his duties were purely official, compensated by an official maintenance, and his personal worth was not specially investigated. He was not really a teacher, he was part of a system, he fitted into his official nook or corner by the fulfilment of routine duties, but no marked individuality, no special leading, was expected of him. Now, Melchisedech stands alone, he is not one of many. Reverence is paid to him, not because of his connexion with a respected body of men, but for his own inherent qualities. It was to the priesthood in him that reverence was paid by Abraham, not as to a member of an order, reverend in itself and entitled to outward marks of respect.

As with Melchisedech, the type, so was it with Our LORD, the antitype. He stood alone. No one was like Him, no one could be really like Him. Reverence was due to Him for Himself, for His own anointing, independently of any chance links binding Him to other men. And as CHRIST, so the Christian priest, very much

lower in the scale, of course, as a subaltern is low down in the scale, compared with the commanding officer, yet still an officer.

Melchisedech stands before us without family, without genealogy, without the domestic ties which were the lot of the Jewish priest. He was a man apart. Thus he conspicuously foreshadows CHRIST, who is pre-eminently a man apart. CHRIST was to be so much *to all men*, that He could have no special tie *to any one*. So has the Christian priest to stand alone, the closer ties of humanity are not for him ; not that they should be rudely broken, but they must play a subordinate part, a somewhat remote and intermittent one, in his ordinary life. Yet in the lives of other men, in the life of the Christian layman, all these rank high in the scale of duty.

The priest after the order of Melchisedech is to be a man apart, in the world, yet not of it, living on bread as other men, yet not on bread alone, sharing the vicissitudes of other men as Melchisedech shared them ; rejoicing in their joys, sorrowing with their sorrows, yet all the while standing as intercessor between God

and man. And this he must do impersonally, not for his own sake or profit, but as an appointed representative of his fellow man. And this again, not by accident of birth, but by the mysterious call, the vocation, of God Himself.

This apartness, or aloofness, is not mere morose, officious standoffishness ; no, certainly not. It is but the apartness of one who is recognized as having other duties in life, and thus placed on a plane apart is honourably distinct from other men. The order of Melchisedech requires this combination, the twisted strands which include a separate thread, a life separate from other lives, yet quite in touch with them and combining with them to make one strong connected whole. For the priest is to sympathize with the men to whom he ministers, to share joys and sorrows, to ease pain, to mould conduct, to win help and pardon from God. To the Jew it was, indeed, a new type, when CHRIST, the Priest of the New Covenant, shared in the life of men, walked with them, talked with them, toiled with them, clothed in the seamless garment woven for Him by

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loving hands, sharing the marriage feast, sharing the grief of the death chamber, one with men, one so near to them, but always and in all things a man apart.

Here, then, is the model for the Christian priest to study, and copy as fairly as he may.

So much for the man himself ; and now let us think of another point, which is suggested to us by

The Sacrifice of Melchisedech

What was it ? Contrast it with the sacrifices of the Aaronic priesthood. This was the slaughter of lusty animals, rites clothed with all the coarse and rough surroundings of the slaughter-house—with the reek of blood and pungent animal odours infecting the air. These were scenes of violence, unlovely pictures for the eye to dwell upon. Yet we must recall this to our memories, as it is needful for the contrast—the contrast it offers to the sacrifice of Melchisedech. In this we find no violence, no cry of terrified beast, no sight or sound to jar on the finer feelings of mankind, and yet it is a sacrifice. But

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where shall we find the meaning of this sacrifice of bread? What is bread? Does not bread sum up in itself and contain in one all that is essential for the life of man? Without bread, man dies. And there is another symbolical offering, that of wine. It is wine that maketh glad the heart of man, so "wine" conveniently symbolizes all the joyous superfluities of life: not that which is requisite for our "esse," our simple "being," but all that is given us over and above for our "melius esse," our abundant "well being." Is it not worth while dwelling a little on the significance of this sacrifice? Does it not all come to us from the East, the lands where symbolism enters so largely into the daily lives of men, that it forms an integral part of those lives.

The priesthood of Melchisedech implies a sacrifice. Now, sacrifice is the giving up of what is esteemed most precious, the difficulty of the act of renunciation being measured by the value of the object given up. What is offered is precious, for what sacrifice can there be in parting with what has no value? But what value is there in

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bread, though wine may be a wine of price? But we must look into the inward meaning of the sacrifice of Melchisedech; this meaning is to be found not in the value of the materials offered, in sacrifice, but in their symbolism. Without bread, life languishes, and is extinguished, so that to offer in sacrifice that by which life is continued as life, is surely a most significant action. To give up to God the means whereby the life is continued is no less a perfect expression of our sense of His right to the life which He has given, than is symbolized by the actual destruction of a vicarious animal life.

The sacrifice of the Christian priest, then, involves the offering to God of man's daily bread, *i. e.* all that goes to make for the continuance of man's life on earth. In this way we are taught that all that makes up man's life may be demanded of him as a sacrifice. All . . . not the dutiful abstaining from what is displeasing to God . . . that, of course; it is duty, not sacrifice . . . but the forgoing of the legitimate comforts of life, the health and strength which is man's most valued

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possession, the tranquillity of a peaceful home, the companionship of the domestic circle, the invisible bonds which link man socially with his fellow man . . . are not all these the very bread of man's corporate life? Are they not just the details which differentiate the cultured man from the uncultured, from the barbarian, from the lower creation, and make life truly human? Yes, and because of this very element, they become the costly materials for the sacrifice of Melchisedech. How different this from the sacrifice of the Jewish priest, who gave not the bread of his life, but the comparatively coarser symbol, the life of a brute beast! It sounds so simple to offer bread in sacrifice; yet, think a moment, and realize how much is summed up in that symbolism. It spreads out far; it sinks into the depths of man's own life. It becomes a very real sacrifice; it cuts deep into the inmost man, and clean oblation though it be, it spares not the very heart's blood.

Can we say less of this sacrifice of Melchisedech? At first sight it is quite commonplace, yet so elastic in its applications,

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If every Christian has to bear in mind that not in bread alone does man live, it is because it is by the sacrifice of that very bread that man's other and higher life is fed and nourished and made strong. The plain sacrifice of Melchisedech ! How often are we reminded of it ? What else is brought to our minds when Our LORD says, "He that loveth father or mother *more* than Me, is not worthy of me" ? It is not that He would divert to Himself the love of parents. That is theirs, and by His own ordaining. But should a time come when a choice has to be made, the preferential love is His, and must be given to Him alone. There are forms of sacrifice, many of them, which are demanded of all the followers of CHRIST and, only somewhat more so, from the Christian priest. When such occasions are before us, we must remember our Royal priesthood ; we may not flinch from giving the very bread of our lives, for it is of a piece with that teaching which says, "If thy eye offend thee, pluck it out : if thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off." Though this is figurative, not literal, the

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meaning is clear enough. It helps to estimate the depth of meaning underlying the seemingly simple offering made by the priest according to the order of Melchisedech.

The sacrifice is still more inclusive. By bread man lives ; in fact, cannot well live without it, normally. But besides the sustenance which merely maintains his life, there is that which gives unusual vigour to it. We have occasional need to emphasize times of special social importance ; there are salient events in life which demand notice ; marriage feasts, the return of the long lost, family gatherings, when something more than plain indispensable bread should be furnished to mark the day with more than red letters. This something more has ever been symbolized, and furnished by the juice of the grape, the rich liquid collected from many a grape, and kept with care, so that in due time and measure it may gladden the hearts of men. In itself a symbol, portraying the unity brought about by the fusion of many, and forming the natural complement to the symbolism of bread. Bread and wine, the daily and the festival

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food of man, all that makes for the usual, and the unusual ; strength for the daily round, and for the joyousness of social life. Wine, too, is meant to put new life into the drooping and exhausted, to help man's life where bread alone could not help him. The combination of these two symbolically cover the whole range of human life ; they meet between them the range of man's wants, and so fittingly furnish the material for the sacrifice of Melchisedech.

If we are to forgo, to sacrifice, the bread of life, must we not even more frequently sacrifice the wine ? The joys of life, not the irrational, the forbidden and stealthy joys, but the honest joys of social intercourse, those which bring man forth from his isolation to share sympathetically joys of friends and relatives, and neighbours ; for mankind at large this is requisite ; for Melchisedech, often a costly sacrifice. For the Christian who can read between the lines there is no need to elaborate this point. For any Christian, the wine of life is material for sacrifice ; it is not for us to put to our lips and drink as each occasion offers, but full many a time has it

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to be put aside manfully, untasted. Yet not always and not for ever. We have to wait, to await the time of compensation ; we refuse to drink at this moment, we wait till we can drink it new with Him, who would not drink the wine of life till He could drink it in the kingdom of His FATHER, "Till I drink it new, with you."

So we have patience, and until we can drink it with Him ; with Melchisedech, we offer it in sacrifice now. But then, in the Kingdom of Our Father, we shall eat the living bread, and drink the wine new, together with Him who is a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech.

THE GIFT OF SICKNESS

Ostendant aegritudinem acceptari ut donum de manu CREATORIS . . . quandoquidem non minus donum est, quam sanitas.—*Reg. Sum.* 50.

Let them show that sickness is accepted as a gift from the hand of the CREATOR . . . for no less than health, is it a gift.

IN formulating this Rule as to our acceptance of health or sickness, St. Ignatius enunciates a spiritual principle which is prolific. It has many applications, reaching far beyond the subject of bodily health to which he has adapted it. We have here a specimen of what is a characteristic of many of the written details of our manner of life, and that is the formulating of an underlying principle, which yields instructive help in many other directions.

Let me explain a little more at length, and definitely, what I mean. When we mention the gifts of God, somehow we always seem to have in mind His pleasant gifts. We hardly ever advert to the un-

doubted fact that GOD has much to give, which most (if any) of us are in no hurry to receive. And yet they are gifts, and intended to benefit the recipient greatly. But they appear in an unattractive form. They often need for their appreciation a deeper insight than is possessed by the average man. The gift of victory all can understand, yet a defeat, bitterly unacceptable as it is, may conduce to the very salvation of a nation. History is full of such instances. Looking back at the last century, might we not say that the first Napoleon, by his defeat of Prussia, became unconsciously the originator of modern Germany?

In this Rule, then, there is set before us, yet not quite on the surface, a most valuable working principle, viz. that apparent failure is very often a direct road to a success. We may say more. It is the special success which has been aimed at through a series of occurrences each of which looked untoward.

When a man is stricken down by sickness, his first and most natural feeling is that of his uselessness. "*Multa bona operari passis,*" says wise À Kempis, "dum

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sanus es, sed infirmatus, nescio quid poteris." "Much good may you do, as long as you are well, but what you can do when invalided, I know not." For a man wants to be up and doing, to put his energies into visible operation. Our usual idea of work is strenuous bustling about and the leaving of a visible trail of solid result. But it is seldom that it occurs to us that anything may be achieved by quiet passive endurance.

Most of us need the reminder of St. Ignatius, that sickness, even sickness, is a gift. To some characters it is a very cornucopia. That character is not necessarily weak which is rich in the more passive elements of human nature, associated, as they usually are, with the feminine half (the better half, some say) of human nature. But they are not the exclusive possession of either sex. In women we not infrequently find a man's strength of character, so in men, there are elements undeveloped by circumstances, yet still there, which find their normal development in the other sex. And that man's character is certainly wanting in its full compass which is deficient in its due trace

of passive virtue. Now it is the gift of sickness which fosters these passive virtues, and we have only to name them, to see how essential they are to the human race. Where, indeed, should we be without Patience, Resignation, Compassion, Sympathy, Helpfulness, Silent Endurance, Forgetfulness of Self and other such quiet virtues which combine to make up the perfection of human character?

We must realize that—besides the bustle and activity which generally commands success, one kind of success—there are other forms of success which are achieved by quite other means.

Can there be such a thing as passive success? Is not the very idea of success an implication of active force which by dourness, by grit, by unwearied toil, has won its way through obstacles? The man who failed was checked by the very difficulties through which the successful man crushed his way, grappling strongly with the opposition which daunted the lesser man. Yes, of course, this is one type of the successful, one variety, but there are others, there is also a Christian variant

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and we need to readjust some of our ideas.

There is no more melancholy spectacle than one afforded by the man crushed by failure. The more melancholy because no one need be a failure. Is this wild talk? Who, if he could help it, would be a failure? The words are not wild, for I do not say a man may not fail in doing this or that; he may, and most frequently does. But failures in one or two directions do not mean a life wasted. We must just enlarge our horizon, our eyes at least must look beyond our parish, we must realize that the world beyond is large and also complicated. Wine which fails as wine may none the less make excellent vinegar. As wine it failed, yes, but in the large world there was room for another commodity, and that it furnishes to perfection. It may be that vinegar never attracts the glamour that spreads, halo-like, about a vintage wine. Yet it has its own perfection. A much more modest success, still, a success. The idea which often needs readjusting is that our notion of success can be, ought to be, must be, shall be, just

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in the one direction in which we have fixed our gaze. We have settled the matter. We have thought it out, worked for it, longed for it, talked of it, and omitted nothing . . . except the reflection, that while our mind has settled the matter one way . . . it has already, by God Himself, been settled in another. We have quite settled to accept one gift, while God has arranged to give us another, and "non minus donum est"; it is quite another yet not less a gift. We have not noticed that our perspective has got wrong, our glasses are out of focus, and until it occurs to us to readjust them, we cannot see clearly.

It is an invaluable Christian acquisition, this power of seeing the gift of God nestling within all the occurrences of life, even within those which are as unpalatable to the average man as is sickness. Speaking metaphorically, when we want the gift of health, we quite often receive the gift of sickness.

It may come about, for example's sake in some such manner as this. In our own minds, we are quite conscious of possessing intellectual power, or power of organ-

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ization, or a power of dealing with the varying intricacies of human character, and so on ; we lack only the gift of the opportunity to exercise, splendidly, our natural capacities. The opportunity does not come ! We feel the waste, also the loss suffered by those to whom our mission is so evident. What a waste of good material ! The field we could cultivate so highly remains barren, and our powers slowly evaporate from want of use. The gifts of God allowed to moulder away, having achieved nothing ! Quite so. Yes. These may be first thoughts, but second thoughts proverbially are better. Let us change our ground a little, and look at these same, but from another point of view. Have these qualities achieved nothing, have they been truly wasted ? Is it not a sort of axiom, that there is no waste in Nature ? If there is waste, the blame rests with the intelligent possessor. He will ask, how could it rest with him ? He asked for nothing more than opportunity ; those who should have furnished him with a field for the exercise of his powers, blindly, or stupidly, or jealously withheld the opportunity.

Very well ; let us take things at the worst and accept all this as true. Some important facts remain. God is rich in gifts. He is also rich in plans, and He is able to waste (apparently) valuable material lavishly in one direction in order to secure results in another. Every acorn is filled with the potentiality of producing a lordly oak, with tenacious roots, and rugged branches that brave the storms and the ravages of time itself, . . . now, each acorn could achieve this, yet most do not. They meet the more ignoble fate of feeding the lower animals, they become the plaything of an idle schoolboy, or lie on the ground when shaken from the parent tree, and decay, and help to enrich the soil from which they originally sprang. To become a tree was their destiny, the design of nature itself : this was the gift of their being, . . . yet . . . it was not their destiny. Still it was a destiny, useful, not conspicuous ; and, yet, it is given by God.

So, not all human acorns become human oak trees, marked and undoubted as is their potentiality. Now, the human acorn has

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to accept his lot, and so glorify his Maker by accepting a rôle which looks, and is, so much below his possibilities.

Herein lies a lengthy chapter of God's providence, who (we mostly forget) may be more glorified by the potentiality than by the actual use. It is good to have a giant's strength, but to use it as a giant . . . We may think that our health is necessary for our service of God, when He wants to be served by our infirmity ; we want our powers to energize, He wants them imprisoned, passive ; to be, not a normal development, but a sacrifice. Now sacrifice cannot be asked of the lower creation ; only intelligent man can offer to God the well-considered restraint of his natural powers. Thus we come to see, that though God may give powers, He may be glorified by the intelligent sacrifice of such powers, more so than by their normal use. Instead of asking us for a gift of actual work, He asks for the more expensive gift of passive sacrifice. He gives us the means of making this sacrifice ; it is a greater gift than the original dowry. " Non

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minus donum est quam sanitas." A gift of a totally different order, yet none the less a gift.

This policy of Almighty God runs through many of His dispensations, it has many applications in a Christian life, as it had in the life of His own SON. In His mortal life He could have changed the course of events, as He said on one occasion, He could have summoned to His aid not twelve frightened Galileans, but twelve legions of angels ; but He was passive, and did not. The power which changed water into wine, which stilled the winds and calmed the stormy waters, could have been exercise in many other ways, and . . . it was not. The potentiality was there, the exercise was restrained. The potentiality did nothing ? Yes, indeed, it did ; it did a great deal, it promoted and fulfilled the designs of God.

There is much need in a spiritual life of the thoughts which arise from dwelling on the teaching of St. Ignatius as to the variety of God's gifts. Much seems mysterious in the apparent waste of material,

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did we not reflect that this very waste is achieving and filling out a definite design. Is an artist wasting time when he sketches out in pencil the rough idea of his picture ? Does a general waste the troops he keeps in reserve, forcing them to stand by and do nothing ? So a possible use of our God-given powers is not to use them at all ! It is not the result of health which is required of us, but the patience for which sickness only can furnish the occasion.

It is a trite remark, yet none the less valuable on that account, that God's ways are not our ways, that out of feebleness He secures strength, out of failure success.

The very failure we contemplate so ruefully is the very success planned by God. It was not the *material result* He aimed at, but He wanted *our mental acceptance* of the unpalatable. The crucifixion of CHRIST Himself looked like failure, the martyrdom of His disciples looked like the premature extinction of valuable lives ; it looked like waste, yet it was not failure nor was it waste. It was the substitution of divine methods for human. It demonstrated that

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GOD secured *His* success even through *our* failure. It teaches that GOD has no need of our puny services, large as they loom in our small horizon. Success with GOD is not measured with worldly measure, the very absence of any achievement which might be our claim to notice from our fellow man may produce the very success GOD had in view when He fashioned us with His creative hand. He would not give the gift of success, because He wanted results which could come only from failure. He would not give us health, because He wanted that which should come to Him from our sickness.

So it has looked like a want of success, but all the while our failing was building up the very form of success for which He had portioned out His gifts. Our eyes were held, for the time, and we did not see the success ; and more, the exact success to which a series of events had led up. We do well to think at times whether God has intended to have from us, not the brilliant career we have dreamed of for ourselves, not the full life which comes

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with the flush of health and strength, but the modest modicum of resignation which we painfully gather from the unwelcome gift of sickness. “Nec minus donum est quam sanitas.”

THE HAND OF GOD

Let each one attend to himself and to his own duties : whatsoever may be arranged concerning himself and others, let him await as if from the hand of God.—*21st Common Rule.*

THE Rules and Constitutions drawn up by St. Ignatius and the early fathers of his Society were framed to be used by men, thoughtful and well educated ; men with a very distinct aim and purpose in life. The Rules, expressed in words as few and simple as is consistent with clearness, were the outcome of much experience of life. They were framed by those who knew the needs of their own times, and who also knew human nature. They saw that the time was ripe for newer methods than those designed to meet the exigencies of days gone by. But the new methods disconcerted and alarmed the conservative instinct, which is ever such a valuable asset in the Church. Minds grown old in assimilating one set of ideas naturally show

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a want of elasticity in adapting themselves to what is quite new. Within the pale of the Church, and, of course, without it, free and damaging criticism was levelled at the new principles and the new practice of the newest of Orders. We speak of this in the past tense, yet it is an antagonism which, more or less, lives and finds expression in each generation.

It is not so unusual for us, even to-day, to have to justify to those about us, the wisdom of the rules under which we live. The carping critic, who has not spared what is most venerable and most sacred in the Church, has not been sparing in criticizing the Rule just quoted to you. "Of course," they say, "you wrap it up in decent words, words with a distinct Christian colouring, but the meaning underlying the words is pure fatalism, kismet, as fatalistic as Mohammedanism itself. All things are to be equably received as the immediate dispensation of God! You (Jesuits) give it another name, but any sensible man can see it is simply 'kismet' expanded into a Christian sentence."

Well, what have we to say to this criticism ?

Let us acknowledge at once that, as far as the mere words are concerned, they admit of an interpretation which accepts all things with the passivity of the rocky bed which allows the river to flow over it, unmoved and unresisting. But men are not rock. If they were it would be quite unnecessary to think out practical rules for their conduct in unforeseen emergencies, when men have to act quickly *on principle*, and not by routine and according to long-established *custom*. We at once meet this crude, yet specious, objection by pointing out that Fatalism is ever stationary, ever passive, unprogressive, and in practice it benumbs the springs of human action. But the Jesuits, who have lived up to this Rule, have not been mere passive lay figures unproductive either in word or work. The great complaint of enemies is, not that they are fatalistically passive, but that, on the contrary, they are much too active, and really, though unseen and generally unsuspected, at the root of everything ; at one time pulling the wires that precipitate wars

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like the Franco-Prussian, and, elsewhere, subtly influencing the appointment of high Anglican Bishops! With century-old accumulation of proof to the contrary, still we are quite willing to admit that the words—apart from the spirit which gives them Christian life—might well express fatalistic apathy, or anything else which ingenuity can extract out of them.

The intelligent understanding of an order is always a distinct help to its observance. The proper appreciation of "The reason why" an order or a rule has been formulated is also, with the members of a religious body, an additional motive for its observance. But why should this rule have been phrased in these particular words?

We should bear in mind that the ideas of St. Ignatius were ever coloured by his early military training. His whole conception was framed on a military basis. In military service, needs are many and often unexpected: these needs must be met promptly, by unhesitating and disciplined compliance. The soldier who first criticizes, and then discusses, and weighs an

order before obeying, more often than not, frustrates the whole result of the order, even if eventually he does obey it. The organized efforts of men depend for success precisely on organization. And organization is nothing but the submission of the individual to recognized law. This principle underlies all organic bodies, whether the bodies be states, or armies, or mere commercial speculations. The success of an organized body of educated men depends on prompt and perfect discipline.

This cannot be secured without an intelligent, and intelligible, reason. What better reason for a Catholic, for one who believes in God's overruling Providence, one who believes in Law and Order, than to propose that the legitimate orders of legitimate authority should be received and acted upon as the expression of God's own appointment? Not necessarily God's *actual choice*, but the course *actually permitted* by Him for the time being. Just as we cannot say that the Passion of Our LORD was God's *only choice*, or even Our LORD's *only choice*, but the Passion was permitted; and "when joy was set before

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Him," Our LORD endured the cross. The *purpose of GOD* shines through the *design of man*. A typical example is when Augustus issued an order for the enrolment of the population, but GOD's purpose was that, by this means, CHRIST should be born, as it was prophesied, in Bethlehem of Juda.

For a Catholic to accept the arrangements of lawful authority as the expression of GOD's wish, "*tanquam de manu DEI*," as if from the hand of GOD—is a most natural proceeding. It is not "kismet." It is the actual will of the Most High. It is the understood will of the Highest Will, intelligently made known to us through legitimate channels. So we may confidently say that it is not fatalism; to accept the lawful orders of lawful authority coming to us in legitimate channels.

I should like to elucidate this point a little more in detail. It is often a practical question with us; and the more we have thought it over the more readily we bend our will and our intelligence to execute the mandates we receive.

First and foremost, we must not leave

out of account the several suppositions which underlie the acceptance of orders in this spirit. For there are postulates taken for granted, and sometimes stated with great directness, in our formulated rules. We are not asked or required to accept with the eyes of our understanding closed tight. Nothing of the sort. We are to use our intelligence. We must satisfy ourselves that it is of those cases "*ubi peccatum non cernitur*," wherein we can distinguish nothing sinful. This supposition alone excludes it from any charge of fatalistic acceptance. Our own conscience is thus actively charged to see its way clear. When, but not before, we have satisfied our minds on this point, then we are required, and justly required, to utilize our powers to the utmost in carrying out intelligently the orders transmitted to us. "As if from the hand of God," does not mean the passive acquiescence with which we submit to a rainy day; mere passive submission is not obedience, "*nomine dignam*," worthy of the name. Obedience does not suppose that we receive an order as a penny in the slot machine receives its

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penny. We are, or, at any rate, we are supposed to be, intelligent machines and we are to grasp intelligently the Superior's mandate, and intelligently carry it out. This is where the play of our faculties comes in. Here we act for ourselves. Here we elicit acts of the highest mental qualification : such acts are voluntary, appreciative, well considered, and include the nicest adaptation of appropriate means to a definite end. All this is mental activity and mental discipline, which does not dull a man's faculties, but gives them an ample field for their noblest, most unselfish and widest exercise.

It should be quite clear to us, that a religious who accepts the commands of his Superiors, when they are clothed with the requisite conditions "as if from the hand of God," performs a distinctly thoughtful, well-considered action. He has satisfied himself that it is a case where it is his duty to obey. Duty is a large expression and may cover a wide field. But duty seldom postulates that we should be put in possession of all the many circumstances which led up to the giving of the order. Frequently it

is not advisable to give reasons for orders issued, yet the framers of the Rule are careful to accentuate the fact that what is required is (*depitam submissionem*) that form of submission which is due. Some form of submission, by one of those errors of human judgement from which no man or body of men is entirely free, might be demanded where it was not due. Legislators must also bear this possibility in mind. And this again shows us how clear these orders are from any fatalistic taint. The submission must be due, or it cannot be demanded, lawfully. However much one may be suffering, say, from a cancerous growth, no one can be ordered to submit to a surgical operation. This is not a case where submission is due, for constitutions deal with ordinary life, not with what is outside that limited range. It might be the height of unwisdom not to submit to the Superior's wish in such circumstances. It is a question not of wisdom but of due obedience. Anyone who knows human nature, knows how easily it exaggerates in forecasting the future. It is most salutary advice to refrain from darkening our life

to-day, by the anticipated gloom of a cloud which may, but equally may not, overcast our sky to-morrow. In quite the majority of cases a hilly road seen from an uncertain distance looks far more steep than it actually is. Somewhat similarly, the anticipated troubles of life are more grievously unbearable in their anticipation than in their actuality. For in our anticipations, we concentrate our attentions on some one irksome point ; now in actual fact there are many points, some of them not really spiky at all, but we brood imaginatively over our spike, forgetful of the rest, forgetful that there are other things besides spikes. It is usually only when we come to the actual experience that we find there are other aspects, things which are not pointed at all, that there are even compensations undreamt of by us. Speaking generally, there are always some natural compensations, which a troubled mind leaves out of account or minimizes. The distant cloud, to our agitated vision, is but a cloud ; it is only when it is actually overhead that the eye sees and the mind appreciates that it has a broad silver lining.

There are thus *natural* compensations in accepting with tranquillity the events of life “*tanquam de manu DEI*,” as it were from the hand of GOD, and what is still to be said of the *supernatural*?

Can we be more generous than GOD? Will He be parsimonious in giving His enabling graces just where and when they are most specially needed? The way may be rough and the journey long, yet “*satis suaviter equitat, quem gratia DEI portat*,” “he rides smoothly enough whom the grace of GOD upholds.”

No one living outside the charmed circle of the family of CHRIST has any conception of the inward helps which anoint the cross and make the rough places smooth. In all that St. Ignatius asks of those who follow his rule, he supposes the presence of these inward graces and counts on them. “*Illa enim interiora sunt, ex quibus efficaciam ad exteriora permanere ad finem nobis propositam oportet*.”

Supposing, then, all that is to be supposed in a trained religious, it is really not too much to ask him to readjust somewhat his natural outlook on things, the things that

affect him, and not to take them wholly at their face value. He is to look not *at* them, but *into* them (non legere, sed intus legere), and if that is done, with time and a fair measure of good will, the grace of God will come to our help. We shall be assisted in accepting the dispositions of Superiors which affect us, without enlightened criticism (as we call our own comments) on their want of insight or without that just indignation roused by their glaring injustice and so on : we shall accept what we can only partially weigh and measure with tranquillity, with calmness and with the steady confidence with which we accept events "from the hand of God Himself."

With his usual common sense and foresight, St. Ignatius does not simply embody in this rule a mere principle of action, he also indicates a working method whereby we may practise the principle. Mere admiration, though stimulating, does not give actual possession. It is practice that makes perfect. Theoretically, we may correctly estimate the tone of mind which accepts the unpleasant with quiet resigna-

tion at its real valuation. That is, so long as it remains a neat theory. But what happens when we are asked to take off our coat and put our own shoulder to the wheel? After all, it is we who have to educate ourselves up to the proper level. The means suggested are lucidly simple when expressed in words, very arduous when put in practice. Yet they are only an echo of St. Paul's advice to Timothy, "*Attende tibi, et doctrinæ.*" The same sound advice is only put into more homely words, "*unusquisque sibi et muneri suo attendens.*" Let each one be occupied with his own self and his own concerns. Let him busy himself with his own occupations ; undoubted sound advice, yet not so easily practised. We are all greatly inclined to take a vicarious interest in what goes on around us. Very rarely do we realize how seldom it is that we have enough data for forming a well-balanced judgement, and that our own solution, which seems so neatly rounded off and appropriate, would be unworkable in practice because of the presence or absence of elements as to which we have taken no account !

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It is just the absence of that element which vitiates our cherished solution ! This is only a natural consideration, but not to be neglected on that account. In the gaining of high spiritual ideals highly spiritual motives must work, yet must we not neglect the more everyday sort of help which lies to hand on a much lower level. We are to reinforce our spiritual armoury also by employing weapons of less ethereal quality, but quite useful for the work in hand.

These are some of the considerations we might turn over in our minds when the words of this rule come before us. How much tiring speculation, how much ingenious but profitless weaving of air-drawn fancies might we spare ourselves and others ; how much really valuable time and energy might we economize, were we only adepts in guiding ourselves by this rule ? If we could limit our efforts at perfecting our small share in lifting the burdens of life ? Yet this perfection, with great peace and tranquillity of mind and heart and imagination, will be the result of efforts to master ourselves by adhering

faithfully to the rule laid down for our daily guidance, if "each one attending to himself and his own duties awaits all that may be arranged concerning himself and others, as it were, from the hand of God."

“THE GRAIN THAT DIES”

A.M.D.G.

Qui mundo et proprio amori mortuus, CHRISTO DOMINO nostro soli vivit.—*Reg. 8va.*

They who are dead to this world and to the love of themselves live for CHRIST OUR LORD alone.

THIS seems a stern and uncompromising doctrine. While not a doctrine of half measures, may it not be rather too much one-sided? Can there be no mitigation, nothing but logic of steel-like rigidity? How far could such teaching be realized in practical life? And, more important than all else, how does it compare with the gentleness of Our LORD's own teaching, He who would not crush the bruised reed? Where does He teach that life to GOD involves death to everything else?

Comparison is easily made, and can any one of us not recall the tenor of some words of Our LORD, recorded for us in St. John's Gospel, which leaves an impression

on our minds quite in harmony with the wording of the rule? “He that loveth his life shall lose it,” and elsewhere, “Except a grain of corn fall to the ground and die, itself remaineth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” The wording of the Rule does but give expression to Our LORD’s own teaching. By studying the words of the Gospel we shall have the best commentary on the meaning of the Rule. Both sets of words convey the same lesson of definiteness without hesitating compromise. He shall lose his life who clings to it with miserly tenacity. The grain of corn which lives to itself is lonely and sterile.

The imagery selected by Our LORD makes His meaning readily accessible to us. As it is the easiest to follow, let us follow it up.

It is quite remarkable how much of Our LORD’s teaching is made clear to us by His illustrations drawn from the book of Nature. He journeyed from village to village with an observant eye. He noted the everyday occurrences of country life, and stored His observations for future use,

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The labourers He saw standing idle in the market place ; the sower He saw going out to sow his seed. He looked over the wheat field where the tares grew side by side with the good grain. He saw the fields white for the harvest. These and many more of the happenings of everyday life, seemingly so trivial, hardly worth notice, He saw, and read into them their instructing lessons. No need to wonder why He chose to read from the book of Nature, for is not that book always open before our eyes, easily read by the runner and the leisurely wayfarer alike ? And now that by His teaching He has withdrawn the veil from before our eyes, we also can read, read much that to the many is hidden away in parables.

There was so much that He noticed. He saw that seeds were scattered on the soft earth, some falling with timely ripeness from the parent plant, some flung wantonly about by the careless hand of man. But however they came to lie upon the bosom of the earth, all had this in common : if they remained intact, if they resisted the softening rain and the sunbeam's warmth,

the seed remained itself alone, hard, dry and unproductive. It was certainly itself yet, but for its potentialities, useless. When it yielded itself to sun and rain, it was no longer its independent self; it reached the term of its being, the forces which held it together were loosened, and it dissolved into what seemed death. It decayed, it lost its individuality, it yielded passively to the forces of dissolution.

And was that the end? It certainly looked like it; but it was not an end: no, it was but a new and grander beginning. The hard rough seed disappeared and was lost to view; seemed lost, till one day a lowly green shoot emerged from a hiding-place almost unnoticed, out of the grave wherein it had hidden, and hour by hour and day by day the green shoot gathered bulk, and became a stem, bearing leaves and branches and flowers, and fruit a hundred-fold. All this had Our LORD noted. He saw that leaves and flowers and fruit were good, yet they never would have had their being unless the seed had died.

“Unless the seed die” . . . “dead to themselves and to this world” . . . A hard

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saying when we hear it by itself ; but consider it in the light of Our LORD's revelation, then we get to know that it is the faithful promise of a life, fuller, higher, and expansive beyond our wildest day-dreams.

Yet it is no dream ; it is a parable which the book of Nature silently spells out for us year by year and day by day. An open book seen by many unheeding eyes, eyes which convey no stimulating message to the slumbering intellect. It was to His own immediate followers that Our LORD addressed His reproach, "*Adhuc et vos sine intellectu estis,*" "and are you, too, also without understanding ?"

We, at any rate, are not to let the symbolism of the seed drift away unheeded ; we have to translate the symbolism into our actual life.

Under this symbolism, we can perceive that it is the powers and possibilities of the human soul which are set before us. Many are the powers hidden from the eye, many the possibilities lying dormant and unsuspected, at least, by us. The eye which read deeply into the book of Nature, read

still more deeply into the human heart. That all-seeing eye, beholding the future with no less clearness than the present, saw the promises hidden away in the seed. They would always remain promises, hidden promises . . . unless “the grain of wheat falling to the ground, dieth.” Every seed needs must be severed from the parent tree, must be cast loose from the sheltering foliage whereon it grew silently to maturity, it must fall to the earth ; such is the law of Nature. So long as it remains nestling in its birthplace it remains alone, giving no fruitful increase according to the design of its MAKER. To work out this design, it must leave the shelter of the tree which bore it.

Is not this a type of the fate designed by GOD for the souls He calls to His special service ? “ Unless the seed die.” “ Forget thy people and thy father’s house.” A hard saying this, hard as the unrelenting sentence, “ Unless the seed die ” ; it must fall, but care is taken to soften its fall to earth, and guide its course aright, so that it fall on good ground, but—fall it must. The book of Nature lies open for us to

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learn this lesson, the most far-reaching lesson a Christian has to learn ; that the service of GOD requires a sacrifice of separation, just as Nature requires the seed to separate from the plant that fashioned and nurtured and bore it to maturity.

The separation may seem the end, yet it is not ; on the contrary, it is but the beginning. The falling seed disappears from sight, perhaps even from memory ; but when the snows of winter have passed, and the spring is come again, the forgotten seed has not been idle ; it died, and, behold, it lives ; full of youthful vigour it bursts from what seemed its grave, green and fresh and bright with the promise of abounding life. Now, all this had Our LORD seen and pondered over, as He studied the book of Nature. He studied it, for it was not a fate marked out only for us, for those called to His immediate service ; the very same book displayed to Him the course of His own life. Was not separation a law also for Him ? Had He not to quit that house of His FATHER in which there are many mansions, had He not to turn His back on the quiet home at Nazareth, was He

not destined to fall to the earth and die, to die that painful death which yet was but the necessary preliminary to His glorious resurrection? It may seem hard, to be called by the voice of God to share the lot of the falling seed, to leave the shelter of home, to pass away beyond the family circle, to face the unknown; yes, and it would be hard if the voice were not the voice of God. But when it is Our Lord walking before us, and reading aloud the lessons He sees in the book of Nature, which first He has studied and put into practice, then it is not so hard to follow where it was so hard for Him to lead.

There is another lesson to be learnt from the seed that falls. It falls, because it yields to a great law. While by its own inherent strength it resists the law, it is unfruitful; when it is obedient to the universal law of gravitation, and falls obedient to that law, then its great future begins. So is it with the Christian soul, as long as it resists law, so long as it is independent; it is indeed independent, but barren. There is a measure of proud independence to be conquered in every human being, and there

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is one virtue which conquers, gently, but completely, and that virtue is Humility. Humility is acquired by submission, and what is submission but Obedience ?

The art of dying to oneself and living to God, like other arts, must be learnt. We must go to school again, becoming as little children, learning first our A B C in the school of Submission and Humility. Such a school is furnished by the Novitiate of every Religious Order, where we begin that education which we finish only with our lives. In the small world of the novitiate we practise, on a small scale, the virtues needed for the actual life in the future. Also, we have to unlearn ; hardest lesson of all. All this seems a reversal of our usual notions, first to unlearn, first to die, that afterwards we may live. Yet, so it is ; first you must pour out of the vase its unwholesome contents, before you can pour in the precious wine. Parting with the old life comes first, the giving up of our former principles of action ; this is dying, getting our new principles, not merely by heart, but *in* our heart ; this is learning to live, “DOMINO nostro

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solì,” for GOD alone. When we have laid aside the garments of everyday life, and clothed ourselves in the livery of Our LORD, then has the seed fallen to earth and its new life has begun.

Having fallen, now must it germinate, unseen, yet active. It must follow fixed laws, a fixed rule of progress. We must not expect the flower before the bud, or the branch before the trunk. The grain of wheat, which will one day bear fruit, develops in an orderly way and according to fixed rules : and so must the Christian soul.

The grain that falls to the ground teaches us yet another lesson. Not only does it develop, but its development is orderly. It does not develop anyhow, there is no inversion in its progress, it follows a fixed rule, and if it develop at all it must be in obedience to that rule. When Our LORD read the book of Nature, He read the steadfast laws written therein. He was the Master of those laws, yet seldom, and for weighty reasons alone, did He exercise His mastery. Having made the laws, He would have them work.

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What law is written larger than universal obedience to law? His reading was not mere superficial glancing at the text, He practised what He read. He would have us imitate His practice. He would obey the law of His FATHER's will, though it led straight to death. All through that night in Gethsemane, in darkness and alone, when His whole being shuddered at the forecast of His Passion, He did not waver. "Not My will, but Thine." It was the will of His FATHER that this grain of wheat should fall to the ground. . . . It fell, and all we have shared in its fruitfulness.

"They who are dead to the world." . . . "Except the grain die." This is a thought that comes to us clothed in Our LORD's own words—a thought borne in His mind as He looked at the face of Nature. It made a deep impression on Him. What does it profit, if the wheat fall not to the earth, if it be not separated from the ear, if it die not? The thought, in other imagery, puts before us the lessons of the cross. The lessons of Separation, Sacrifice, Obedience.

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To live for CHRIST Our LORD, alone—that is what we hope to do in heaven. The preliminaries are for this world. If you would live with Him, first must you die. We must not be alarmed at the sound of a word. There is more than a word here. If it seems a hard lesson for flesh and blood to learn . . . well, all lessons are hard at first ; we have not to learn our lesson all alone, we shall not be left to struggle single-handed. At a distance, the labour looks hard, but it is made strangely light by the motive, the love of CHRIST ; and has not a wise man told us, that no labour is hard when we love what is undertaken for the sake of those we love ; “non dura ibi necessitate servitur, ubi diligitur, quod jubetur.”

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CHRISTO DOMINO soli vivit, eumque loco . . . rerum omnium habet.

Living for CHRIST Our LORD alone, . . . and having Him instead of everything else.—8, *Sum. Con.*

TO live for CHRIST alone is a general principle for Christians. General principles have this inconvenience, no one controverts them, every one readily admits them, and, generally speaking, there they are neatly pigeon-holed for indefinite future reference. It is only by the appropriate individualizing of accepted generalities that we discover their latent motive power.

Where is any special force of this particular generalization? The best way to get to it is one that is circuitous. Or we might say that we get to our objective by following many converging streams of thought, social as well as religious, which flow in the same direction, combining their various streams in ever-increasing volume, to pour their united flood into the same ocean.

One little stream began its career long

ago, when St. Ignatius (perhaps unconsciously) inaugurated a movement whose development is yet in progress. Not that he broke ground entirely new, but with a new prominence he called attention to the personality of Our LORD. In giving a name to the Society he founded, in a fashion until then not thought of, he gave a somewhat new occasion of everyday prominence to the person of JESUS CHRIST. Obviously He and no one else was always the centre of Christian love and worship. Yes, the centre always, yet with a circumference. I must explain. In the earliest days of Christianity, in those times which preceded the writing and the diffusion of the New Testament, the knowledge of Our LORD was propagated by the burning words of those who had come into personal contact with Him, or with His immediate disciples. An intense love for the personality of CHRIST Himself was the result. Words such as we read in the office of St. Agnes merely voice what was in the heart of many Christians. "Posuit signum in faciem meam, ut nullum *præter Eum amatorem* admittam,"¹ and again :

¹ "A sign has He put in my face, that I should countenance no lover but Himself."

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“Ipsi sum juncta in cœlis, quem in terris posita *tota devotione* dilexi.” “Omnipotens, adorande, colende !” All these expressions put into the mouth of St. Agnes let us into the inmost heart-thoughts of the early Christian.

This personal love for Himself He claimed, “If any man loves father or mother *more* than Me, he is not worthy of Me.” This love which He claims is a discriminating love, it is properly termed a “Preferential love,” for he requires that we should also have other forms of love, filial and social, to flourish each in its due measure. There is no conflict of duty or of love, only due subordination for this supreme love which they so willingly give him ; the early Christians neither had nor wanted written documents, no careful literary criticism to make clear to them what manner of man He was. It was from the living Word that they got to know Him, oral tradition handed down a knowledge that won entire devotion to His person and service. They felt the love for Him which radiated from His earliest followers. Not written documents, no carefully annotated editions of

the Gospels or the writings of St. Paul bred the rank and file of the early Church and the race of Martyrs. Assuredly, written testimonies addressed to those already in possession of the gift of Faith were a valuable help, but they were not the one basis or the groundwork of their belief. Christianity was spread abroad by the knowledge of His personality certainly, no less than by the actual teaching of the Man who taught with authority and not as the Scribes and Pharisees, whose hearers said of him, "Never did man speak as this man speaks." When written documents came, there came with them ever-varying interpretations which incidentally opened the door to nascent heresies. The chief means which Divine Providence chose to begin Christianity remain the chief means for its continuance and growth. This will always be true. Yet we may not leave out of account the individual circumstances of time and place, race also and national features and characters. Responsive to these side influences at various periods and in various places, we find some doctrine or form of devotion more in evidence and more popular

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as they happened to suit one race rather than another, one type of civilization rather than some other. This is just what we should expect. The Spirit of God, breathing where it lists, time and again inspires new forms of devotion, adapted to new developments of thought and the ever-changing external conditions of progressive human life. Changes such as these, inevitable as they are, yet are not free from elements of danger. We are guarded against such dangers and we also learn the special spirit of our day by noting the devotions propagated with the approval and blessing of the Rulers of the Church.

By the rise of the cult of the Sacred Heart and the cluster of devotional practices which encircle it, the minds of men have been directed to the person of Our LORD as the object of Christian adoration. Some immediate consequences are evident. The devout attention of the Christian body being thus drawn to Our LORD, piety found its natural outlet in the increased frequentation of the Sacraments, Holy Eucharist for itself, Penance as a fitting preliminary preparation.

It was simply natural that the society which bore His name should welcome that devotion as especially its own, seeing that its aim is to make Our LORD better known and more deeply loved. This indeed is also the aim of all orders and of every individual Christian, but the roads by which they travel to it are many and various.

While this purpose and its realization are entirely admissible, there are those who point out a collateral effect, which may not have been foreseen. If men give their whole heart's devotion to Our LORD in His own personality, other lesser, but helpful, devotions tend to become inconspicuous and to fade away. This they must do, because all devotions are but ancillary to this main one; they are not ends in themselves, but only pathways leading us easily upward and onward. What St. John, greatest amongst the saints, said of his position relatively to that of Our LORD, "*Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui*," "He must increase, but I must lessen," formulates with equal truth and humility the inevitable line of progress, and one conspicuously verified in his own

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case, for, great as is our admiration of the Baptist, his position has faded far into the background since the days when his festival brought with it the privilege of allowing priests to say three Masses, thus assimilating it to Christmas Day itself. Like the mission of St. John, the mission of all devotions is to lead in the right direction ; their task fulfilled, they become of less moment, and fade naturally into the background. When we practise a devotion which brings us so immediately in contact with the Author and Finisher of our faith, we no longer have that special need for those pedagogues of the faith who fulfil towards the Christian soul a part not unlike that of the Synagogue itself, which having led and pointed the way, has ceased its function on the fulfilment of its allotted task. Yet we can never forget that at all times the living examples of the Saints, their sayings and doings, remain for mankind pointed lessons as to the manner and degree in which we can worthily serve Our LORD, though we shall mostly fall short in reaching the eminence attained by that *corps d'élite*, the Saints.

With all helps and aids, all Christians, religious no less than others, have need of a special devotion. Where can a devotion be found which, more than the cult of the Sacred Heart, contains within itself all the elements which appeal to the loyalty of the soldier of CHRIST ? The personality of our Leader is set before us in strong relief, together with those special features which plead most movingly, and appeal to all that is best and loftiest in the mind and heart of man. Then, how naturally this devotion groups around itself the many devotional practices which must have a large place in every inward Christian life ! Where can the Heart of Our LORD be better worshipped than in the Blessed Sacrament ? Who better than His Blessed Mother can furnish a model as to how the person of Our LORD should be loved ? Who gives us lessons of silent toil in the background, unassuming but so entirely self-forgetting, as furnished to us by that most unobtrusive of saints, St. Joseph ? Devotion to the Heart of Our LORD becomes the centre, the very focus, of all devotions. In one continuous chain it links together all ways and means of draw-

ing us to the closest and most loving study of the personality of Our Divine Master. From this personality it is that Christianity ever radiates, enlightening, moulding, transforming those who are thus irradiated. A man is really a Christian in proportion as he has been enlightened and remodelled. Now, to model successfully, one must study time and again, and with great minuteness, the copy set before us.

So unique is the figure of Our LORD, that He is the subject of study not merely of those who are called by His name and try to live according to His precepts, but by many men of thoughtful nature, men earnest and studious and laborious, who have set down in writing some of the results of their prolonged research. There is often good grain amongst chaff, and they have brought to light many useful facts of history and archæology which add to our knowledge. For this we can be unfeignedly grateful, while there is sorrow mingled with our gratitude. They lack the faith which is the only key to those doors before which they stand. They linger outside and exhaust themselves with multiplied

and ever-crumbling conjectures as to what lies hidden behind those close-barred gates. But to us they are not gates permanently shut. With the certainty of faith, we know and we have to hand on, the message which reveals the secrets close-guarded by those fixed barriers. To carry our message, we must bestir ourselves ; in every way we must fit ourselves for that special task of carrying our message to the men of our own generation. Our own tongue is often not understood except by those of our own household of the faith ; we must learn the language which will be the medium of communication. This implies work. Devotion to Our LORD's service is often enough shown by work : not by sentiment, which is pleasanter, but not nearly so profitable. St. Paul did not sentimentalize, but worked ; and his work was the measure of his devotedness. His work was the combating of pagan errors ; there lies work before us in combating errors no less pagan, though called by other names. Sometimes the work lies within the domain of our own heart and mind.

Now, every man coming into this world

has to work. Not necessarily in the work of the field labourer or of the skilled artisan, for work is a very general expression. It means that we must take some share in the general life of mankind, helping it upward or downward. Our LORD's sentence is definite and final, "He that is not with Me, is against Me." Our co-operation may be somewhat passive, yet it is real. And we have our choice. We can throw in our life's work against GOD, if we choose. Yet the most elementary knowledge of GOD should suffice to make us labour on the right side. We are not free, in this aspect, to labour or to idle, for idling is labour spent in the wrong direction. As we have to work, as our work should consist in helping on the work of GOD and not in doing our feeble best to ruin that work, what better incitement to work can we have than the sight of Our LORD Himself as a worker and toiler, not only for us, but with us, and we with Him? Hence the knowledge of His energizing personality is so stimulating in arousing our co-operation, just that co-operation which GOD desires from His free creation. Not our inward sense of duty

only, but the sight of CHRIST labouring, toiling, fasting, teaching, healing, patient, calm under injustice, tenacious of purpose, persevering, all the manifestation of a character human, but absolutely perfect, this combined pattern of all perfection, forms a stimulus to our hesitating will, powerful, yet human, beyond the range of any inventiveness of our own. But to have its full effect upon us, we must know it with a knowledge that has soaked into the very marrow of our bones. Knowledge of Him gives power.

There is nothing more helpful in working, than an intimate knowledge of Him for whose sake we work. The more we know, the wider our field of usefulness. Our co-operation with God is manifold ; all that throws light on the times, the land, the history, the customs and manners of those with whom He lived, a man among men, all that we can unearth out of a buried past, will build up a knowledge which will be a power to us ; it will be a lifelong, yet congenial task. For ourselves, we may not require much, but we have duties towards others. The gift of faith is for us an ever-

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flowing fount of devotional instincts and impulses. But not all have this gift.

The times are gone when we could count on docile acceptance of authoritative teaching. The spirit of criticism is abroad ; in some instances it filters through even into the sheltered fold. Our co-operation will be in giving solid reasons for the faith which is in us ; we must know how to blend the natural and the supernatural. For He was God and Man, combining in His one Person attributes the most contradictory, so must we know how to blend the supernatural knowledge of Himself, which we gain from our meditations, with the reliable results of patient historical research, with the material for knowledge which the spade of the excavator brings to light from the long-buried past. Our co-operation involves reading. Not a scatter-brain rambling through miscellaneous printed matter, always a danger to imperfectly trained minds, unaccustomed to sift the chaff from the wheat ; but reading under that proper guidance which alone will lead to useful results. Promiscuous dabbling in the latest publications easily suggests obvious prob-

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lems, but seldom furnishes the often intricate solutions.

The booklets published by the Catholic Truth Society, though in humble form, give solid workmanship, easy of access, and a firm basis on which to build. So there are many ways in which we can find helps to faith, helps to broaden out the groundwork of our thought, making the foundation more clear to reason, according to the Apostle's advice, "*Rationabile obsequium vestrum*" (your reasoned and reasonable service).

Here is a part of the work of co-operation expected of us. In this work, we aid ourselves; we are in harmony with the spirit of the times in which our lot is cast.

The supernatural has its base in the natural. That spiritual life which is based on clear knowledge will have all the firmer foundation. Uncertain knowledge is mere sand, and can furnish but a crumbling foundation. The tower of perfection we would fain build in imitation of Our LORD must have sufficient material, its foundations must be wide as well as firm, and in gathering these materials, no less than in using

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them, we are employed in that special co-operation with GOD, labours which end in giving a deep knowledge and an abiding love of Him who first laboured and toiled for us, and earned the right to ask us to work and labour with Him.

A WORKING PARTNERSHIP

All, as long as they are well in health, must have some occupation, either spiritual or external.—*Reg. Sum.* 44.

NOTHING is more remarkable in the world about us than its ceaseless activity. It is true that we do not always advert to the unwearied industry of the ever-acting forces of Nature. But there are some we cannot help noticing, the ceaseless ebb and flow of the tides, the waxing and waning of seasons, and the wealth of foliage and fruit they bring and take away. Yet who can register the growth, century by century, of a coral reef, the unperceived daily evaporation of a glacier? Facts like these hardly appeal to our senses, except after periods of time too extended for individual men to notice. We come to realize that all about us is activity, some seen, much more unseen, in the air, in the sea, and in the seemingly inert dry land.

And not only is physical nature ever toiling. Our LORD, pointedly, has called our attention to the never-ceasing work of His heavenly FATHER. "My FATHER," He says, "worketh until now," and He added, "and I work" (John v. 17).

St. Ignatius could not omit all reference to such an evidently great law of Nature. We all know the consequences of trying to contract ourselves out of this universal law. So the Rule is a necessary allusion to a law which no one can ignore with impunity. Its purport is mainly directive, that Superiors should see to it that no available force should be allowed to run to waste. Also, that no injudicious, no unkind burdens should be placed on shoulders unfit, by reason of health and strength, to bear such burdens.

Besides this general consideration, that the universal law of work, some sort of work, is binding upon all of us, there are further considerations as to the nature of the work, the conditions of work, and the motives for work, which demand our especial attention.

Our LORD says of Himself, in so many

words, "I work." From our position, we are called to share in this work of His. This is true of every Christian, according to the words of St. Paul, "For we are partakers of CHRIST" (Heb. iii. 14), and still more emphatically are we warned to work by CHRIST himself, as when in His parable He represents Himself as saying to His servants, "Traffic till I come" (Luke xix. 13). From this, it is not far-fetched to argue that we are called upon to trade, to work *with* CHRIST, as well as *for* Him, with especial fidelity and perseverance.

This engenders a thought that should be ever uppermost in our minds, "I am working, it is true, but I work *as a partner*, doing my share, yet only my share, even if I do that. For in all the work I do, the predominant partner is Our LORD ; He does the lion's share, and my work, without His, would be sadly trivial, and weak, and inefficient."

We who are the co-workers with CHRIST are apt to throw ourselves into work very much in accordance with our inborn temperament. The active, energetic, restless man wants to be always working, always

wants his own finger in every pie, and pronounces all pies badly made where his finger has been kept out. This type of man, one generally in good physical health, likes work for *its* own sake, and also for his own. He is inclined to dwell, with more or less evident self-satisfaction, on what he alludes to as "My work"; inferring, the things I have achieved by my own energy, my own ability, my own perseverance. That he had any partner in his work, hardly occurs to him. Still less does it occur that the invisible partner was really the one who was predominant. No; he thinks of the work as his (as *part* of it truly was) and he assumes, without any misgiving, that the undivided credit should be entirely his. What often happens? This is a matter where the unseen partner has influence; He has shared the toil, justice demands that He should have some share in the credit. Yet He is too often ignored, and the inadequate result of much toil that sometimes attracts our notice may come as a hint from the unseen partner, that He has been left out of account, and so He must call attention to His warning words

(John xv. 5), "Without Me, you can do nothing."

In this way the inadequate result of many labours is explained; of course, I do not say that it is thus always to be explained, but, not infrequently, it is accounted for by the human partner arrogating to himself too much of the result, which was really due to the conjoint work of both partners. So it is a useful reflection, "I, indeed, can work, as St. Paul worked when he planted; as Apollo worked when he watered (Heb. ii. ; Cor. iii. 6), but it was GOD who gave the increase."

Partnership with CHRIST is not a worldly career. It cannot be measured by worldly standards, nor can success be commanded by worldly methods. A man may put into a priestly career all the energy, all the strength he would have put into a professional one, and, to a certain extent, the success that energy achieves he will achieve also in the ecclesiastical, as in the mundane, career. Yet it is not a success for CHRIST, it is an ephemeral success, a tower of glittering ice, sparkling, even dazzling to the eye; but it melts away, even as the

sun of prosperity shines on it, and leaves no lasting trace behind it.

Partnership with CHRIST means that we naturally leave the main direction of things to Him ; that He may show us both what is to be done, and also the way in which to do it. Daily we meet together and unitedly we pray : “ Quæsumus, DOMINE, ut cuncta nostra oratio *et* operatio, a *Te* semper incipiat, et per *Te* cœpta, finiatur.”¹

After all, it is this partnership with CHRIST which gives life and meaning to our Rule of Obedience, for, while our obedience is emphasized, we are warned that we are to submit to orders, not because of the wisdom or influential position of the ruler, but that, in all our submission, we must bear in mind, “ Quis ille sit, cui obediunt . . . et cui in omnibus obediunt, qui est CHRISTUS DOMINUS.” Who He is whom they obey in every act of obedience, viz. CHRIST Our LORD.

It is our predominant partner whose

¹ “We beseech Thee, O LORD, that every prayer and work of ours may begin from Thee, and having been begun by Thee, by Thee may it be completed.”

voice we obey, a voice we recognize, and whose recognition means compliance ; just as one partner follows out the instructions which reach him from his principal, through the telephone, no less readily than if he had the intimation face to face.

We must not suppose that partnership with CHRIST means that we are to forgo all initiative. Such a conception is evidently outside the mind of one who provides the means for our united efforts, and, while He Himself attends to His share, gives us a really free hand when He says, "*Traffic till I come.*" Of course, we are not left without indications as to the lines along which our traffic is to be conducted ; we are not left without sufficient help, yet we are meant to be up and alert, for CHRIST does not want any sleeping partners. He wants work ; He even goes so far as to say that He is a hard man, and He was by no means satisfied when the lazy servant defended himself, and gave back, in its entirety, all that, as a sleeping partner, He had received. "Wicked and slothful servant," was the reproof ; "thou knowest that I reap where I sow not, and gather

where I have not strewed : thou oughtest to have committed My money to the bankers, and at My coming I should have received mine own with usury" (Matt. xxv. 27). So we must conclude that partnership with CHRIST means work, and intelligent work, and sufficient work. In the very forefront of his *Constitutions*, St. Ignatius enunciates a principle he never loses sight of. "Suavis dispositio," he says, "Divinæ providentiæ creaturarum suarum co-operationem exigit." The GOD in whom we live and move and have our being, to whom we say, in the words of the Church, "*Tu qui cuncta scis et vales*," nevertheless, exacts our small measure of associated toil ; being able to do all things, He yet demands our added labour, not for His sake but solely for our own.

Nothing in nature is allowed to be really dormant and unproductive, and this law is imposed also on us.

Work of some kind we must do, and there is this consideration for us to dwell upon, as to our work. All our work is toil undertaken *in companionship* with Our LORD Himself. The hand of Our LORD clothes with

dignity any and every labour which He undertakes. That dignity He passes on to us when He passes on to us the labour which His own hand might have finished, but which He purposely leaves unfinished, that *we* may take it up where He leaves it, so that our infantile efforts may give us some shadow of claim to partnership in His toil. The thought that we are at work on the same material whereon CHRIST worked warns us that we must work with the same dispositions, according to the self-same methods. We cannot ignore CHRIST when doing the work of CHRIST, for, if we do, we shall find, to our dismay, that while we have toiled our selfish work has been only to scatter where He had gathered. How can it be otherwise, if CHRIST labours to build up and we labour to pull down, if CHRIST labours for the glory of His FATHER, and we labour really for our own glory?

We have to be careful, not simply about the fact that we do work, but still more careful as to *the intention* and the motive actuating our work. When we work professedly in union with our great partner,

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it is not loyal to leave out of account the *one object* of the work we do, not simply *for*, but *with*, our partner. This gives us a test and a standard. Work for CHRIST is differentiated by the motive. Work for CHRIST is real toil, not dilatory tinkering ; it differs, as mere thin electroplating differs from the solid gold itself. For the moment, to the superficial observer, both look very much alike, yet the one will stand all the stress of wear and tear ; the other soon wears thin, and exposes the base metal temporarily hidden beneath the fairly shining surface.

With all our reasons for work and activity, we must associate another consideration. No one can be perpetually active. There must be seasons of rest and repose. Also, times when wearied nature can do no more. So we have the wise, qualifying words made part of the Rule, "*Quamdiu bene valent.*" So long as they are well. And this suggests another thought, lying beneath the surface-meaning of the words. Work for CHRIST requires something more than physical well-being. We are not asked to work, as a worker be-

longing to a trade union is asked to work. The external effort which all labour demands is, of course, demanded also of us. But there must be an invisible and super-added quality, when the work is CHRIST's work which we are called upon to share. A good handicraftsman puts his heart and his skill into his work ; his wages are not the only motive for his toil, he takes a pride in the result of careful labour. We handicraftsmen, who labour with CHRIST, at CHRIST's work, must put our hearts and our very lives and souls into the work. Not the work of our hands alone, but much more, the work of our spirit must enter into our daily task. For it is this that matters, the spirit animating the work ; the work itself is comparatively immaterial. Without us, GOD can make bread of stones ; but without us, He cannot have the loyal co-operation of a human heart and soul, living to spend itself and be spent in His service. The fact that our work is for CHRIST ennobles every task we do, no matter how lowly it may be in itself ; the giving of a cup of water involves no straining of our muscles, nor does it tax our energies, yet,

because of the intention of the giver, this passing act is dowered with an everlasting reward. The building up of the Temple at Jerusalem, with lavish magnificence, wherein Herod employed time and treasure and the highest artistic skill of his age, did not evoke so much as one passing word of even formal compliment. But the widow's mite is gratefully remembered to this day.

It is not the quantity of work, nor the artistic excellence of the work, but the underlying intention which, itself unseen, nevertheless leavens the work with a quality which appeals irresistibly to the Heart of Our LORD.

Work, then; some sort of work, spiritual or temporal, will be found for us by our superiors. What they cannot find for us is the disposition of heart and soul which will give value to our work. This is given as long as it can be said of our soul, "*Bene valet.*" This must be our contribution. When we have thought of the great law stamped visibly upon the universe, we must let our mind dwell upon the no less great law of CHRIST, stamped

on our individual souls by the great Christian virtues. "*Illa enim interiora sunt, ex quibus efficaciam ad exteriora permanare oportet.*"

They are the inward energies, whence efficiency should flow, for all the various works which are done for CHRIST.

THE VINE

AN ALLEGORY FOR THE FEAST OF
ST. IGNATIUS, A.M.D.G.

Ego sum vitis, vos palmites.

THERE are many ways of teaching. We may teach by word, we may teach by example, we may teach by appealing to the well-known sights and sounds about us, and from the familiar scenes of our everyday life draw lessons of life and conduct. This was Our LORD's method of teaching as He walked and talked with His Apostles, and He called their attention to the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, and taught them lessons of God's providence. He showed them the sower sowing his seed in the fields they passed, He showed them the same fields white for the harvest, and from each and every one of these everyday objects He drew lessons of high significance, of deep and lasting

importance. And it chanced that when Autumn came and He passed by the vineyards, He showed His Apostles the dry, rugged stems of the vine, its spreading leaves and its ripening fruits, and the busy men of the vineyard toiling to give the fruit of the vine its ultimate destiny. With the spreading vine before their eyes He drew His lessons, saying to His wondering Apostles, "I am the Vine, and you are the branches."

As Our LORD was, so were to be His disciples and followers, especially those close followers of His, the Saints. There was to be a likeness, a visible resemblance, a far-off resemblance, yet still a resemblance between His life and the lives of many of His devoted followers ; and many of the features of Our LORD's life were to be recognized in the lives of those who loved Him best and strove to follow Him most closely. If Our LORD was a vine, spreading its branches and its leaves far and wide and bearing delicious fruit, so did He wish that His followers should share in these characteristics. Though we are all vines planted by the same Divine Husbandman,

yet not all of us bear sweet fruit, for some bear only leaves, . . . and some very sour grapes indeed.

In the month of July, we celebrate the memory of one who was indeed a close follower of his Master, a vine planted in good soil which brought forth fruit a hundred-fold—one whose name and whose deeds are household words. The name of Ignatius, though it may call up various emotions in the breast of friend or foe, is a name stamped indelibly on the history of the world. He was a fruitful vine ; let us not be content with mere empty admiration of it, but let us look at it so that we may see how we can be careful husbandmen and turn the days and hours of our labour to good account.

There are five things about the vine which present themselves to our notice: the Wood of the vine—the Leaves of the vine—the Fruit of the vine—the Labour spent on the vine—and its ultimate destiny. These were some aspects under which the vine presented itself to the sight of Our LORD and His Apostles, and formed

as it were the text of His discourse to them. We also may consider them and learn what they teach us of that devoted follower of His under whose guidance we too are following that same LORD.

A. *The Wood of the Vine.*

What in the eyes of men seems more ordinary, commonplace, without beauty, without utility even? It is too fragile for most purposes, its rough and stringy and twisted bark seems, and is, of no value for the ordinary purposes of life: and yet, out of that unsightly stem what goodly fruit is produced, beautiful to the eye and grateful to the taste. . . . The early life of Ignatius was the wood of the vine, for who would have thought that the energetic soldier, who loved the rough life of the camp and had no thought but for the romance of chivalry and the honour which could be gained by the sword, who would have thought that the high-spirited soldier, ambitious of military glory only, was to become a gentle, humble and saintly follower of CHRIST?

The wood of the vine so unsightly and so unpromising. Yes, that might well have been the thought of those of his friends and relatives, who saw St. Ignatius unclasp his sword and put off his rich garments and clothe himself with a beggar's gown, and live on the charity of strangers. Most certainly it seemed a life without honour and without usefulness, unbecoming in the eyes of men and uncalled for by God. But in very truth in the sight of God it was heroism, heroism hidden under an unattractive exterior from the eyes of men. It was heroism, in that he practised that poverty, that spirit of voluntary resignation of all that makes man's life desirable and so made him so close a follower of Him who had chosen poverty and not riches ; heroism again in that he practised obedience and made the unseen sacrifice which comes hardest to human nature, the giving up of one's own will. And men saw nothing of this hidden heroism, they saw but the unlovely exterior bark of the vine, and had no suspicion of the wonderful fruit which that unsightly stem should one day produce.

B. *The Fruit of the Vine.*

But if men saw nothing but what was unattractive in the earlier life of Ignatius, the eyes of GOD were more penetrating. For thirty years Our LORD Himself had led a hidden life, and men thought nothing of what they saw in Him, except to remark, "Is this the son of the Carpenter?" But what had the eye of GOD seen during the thirty years of that hidden life? And so it was with Ignatius. For his victory over himself in so completely giving up the world, in literally becoming a little child once more, and climbing the ladder of education from its lowest step, that he might fit himself to be a more useful instrument in GOD's hands—in these ways he brought forth fruit, the fruits of justice, of peace, of holiness, of charity, of meekness, of resignation—all this he brought forth in patience and in much suffering. "I have chosen you," said Our LORD, "that you might bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain." If we had seen St. Ignatius, clothed in the tattered garment of a mendicant, living a solitary life in the

rocky cave of Manresa, living apart from men, living a life of solitude and prayer, how little should we have thought that the fruits of that life of penance and retirement were all-important to ourselves? And not only to us, but to millions of our fellow-beings. From that cave came forth the great Society which has carried the Name of JESUS to every land upon which the sun shines. It was Ignatius who was one of the instruments employed by God to revive the frequentation of the life-giving Sacraments; and how many have not only made their peace with God, but also reached high sanctity in consequence of the teaching of Ignatius? We ourselves are part of the fruit brought forth by this vine. What abundant fruit has he not brought forth! Look at the lands evangelized, the schools and colleges built, the churches erected, the Sodalities and Guilds founded, the books written; all this and more springs from the fidelity and the energy of him whose hidden life had seemed to so many but as the rough bark of the vine, dry, limp and unsightly.

C. The Leaves of the Vine.

It was not only the fruit of the vine which attracted Our LORD's attention, when He pointed out the vine to His Apostles and founded His discourse upon it. The vine had great spreading leaves, whose fresh green colour lent a charm to its foliage ; and while they charmed the eye, the leaves sheltered the swelling grapes from the too great heat of the sun, and from the rushing wind and from disastrous downfalls of hail and rain. The fruit of the vine was useful to others, but its leaves were useful to itself. So shall we find fruit and leaves in the garden of Saints ; and while the fruits represent the result of their labours which benefit others, the leaves represent the virtues which benefit themselves, the virtues of modesty, prudence, humility and self-restraint ; these are the leaves which shelter and adorn the vines of Our LORD. St. Ignatius was especially remarkable for his prudence, so that a great writer has said of him, that other saints may have surpassed Ignatius in the exercise of some saintly practices, but

no one ever surpassed him in prudence. No one ever weighed more carefully and anxiously the reasons for and against any course of action ; but, having made up his mind, no one acted more strongly or more consistently. The prudence of Ignatius has left its mark on the Church, as, for instance, whereas in the older Orders members were permitted to take solemn vows at the end of a year's trial, St. Ignatius required some seventeen years, and the spirit of his legislation has since completely modified the action of the Church in this respect, as in many others.

If he was remarkable for his prudence, so was he also for his modesty. But St. Ignatius would do his work unseen ; he was content to labour and had only one ambition, and that was that all he did and counselled might redound to the greater honour and glory of God. For the greater glory of God, he would set before his followers a higher standard of perfection than any he could reach himself ; he would have them forget himself, and think only of their common LORD and Master.

Prudence and Modesty ! What truly

Christian virtues ! But all Christian virtues flourish only in an atmosphere of self-denial and mortification, and mortification is largely caused by the action of others, and that brings us to the consideration of another point noticed by Our LORD, and that was—

D. The Labour spent on the Vine.

For the vine would not produce the fruit it does with the labour and the care of the husbandman. He digs the ground and prepares the soil, and trains the growing shoots ; he carefully prunes the promising branches and cuts off and casts away those which are useless. Though all these labours may seem uncalled for, nevertheless they are of immense importance to the vine. And when Our LORD proclaimed Himself the Vine, He added, “PATER meus Agricola est.” My FATHER is the husbandman, who trains and prunes and cuts off and gathers in the harvest.

In the lives of the Saints we see the action of the Divine husbandman, who trains His Saints, and cuts off opportuni-

ties of sin and imperfection, and prunes by many a bitter trial and many a sacrifice. And it was not without many a pang, and much rebellion on the part of nature, that Ignatius bade adieu to his dreams of worldly greatness, that he severed himself from friends and relatives ; and he, the proud soldier accustomed to command, begged his way through Spain and France and Italy, and endured the hardships of a voyage to the Holy Land in the midst of such discomforts as would shatter the health of most of us nowadays. Besides his bodily sufferings, he was misunderstood, calumniated, denounced, imprisoned and slandered by those whom he had benefited. Truly, the Divine husbandman was not sparing of His labour, so that this vine might worthily accomplish its ultimate destiny, and we are the witnesses of the success of those labours !

E. Its Ultimate Destiny

And what is its ultimate destiny ? If the vine is good, and well cultivated, and carefully watched, and has brought forth

perfect fruit, then must its fruit be crushed in the wine-press. "It seems," says St. Austin, "that we are doing an injury to the grape, but it is an injury which is a benefit." For if the grapes were left on the vine, they would only wither and dry up, and become useless ; but when crushed in the wine-press they yield the precious wine which is kept, and stored up for the special banquets of the LORD of the vineyard. The wine-press. Is not every tribulation the wine-press of the LORD? To the greater saints it is said, as it was to St. Paul, "I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." They must tread the way of tribulation, not only for their own sakes . . . but also for the encouragement of us all.

Shall we not derive encouragement from the memory of what St. Ignatius did, from what we know, from what we see, of the results of his labours, even to this our day? Three hundred years have come and gone. There were great ones who, in his day, ruled, and seemed to direct the destinies of nations—their very names have faded from the memory of men—but the name

of Ignatius lives, the work of Ignatius lives, and the words of Ignatius still live in one small book, to stir the hearts of men to love and serve the LORD Our God, better and yet more perfectly.

The vine may have seemed a dry and useless branch, but it put forth leaves, and it bore fruit, and the fruit passed through the wine-press of many tribulations, and has produced the good wine which cheers the heart of man in his pilgrimage, and, when wisely used, restores his flagging energies.

The memory of Ignatius will not die ; the work he began will continue and prosper ; his example, in the future, as in the past, will stimulate many a sluggish will to live, not for self, not for the day and the hour, but for that mighty purpose which lived and energized in every thought, every word, every action of Ignatius.

“AD MAJOREM DEI
GLORIAM.”

A MESSAGE FROM GOD

The Angel Gabriel and Mary Immaculate.—Luke i. 26–38.

IN the Breviary lessons for the Octave of the Immaculate Conception we read these words, taken from a sermon of St. Epiphanius on the praise of our Lady. “Ave sanctissima Mater Immaculata.” We could hardly pretend that these words, “Hail, most Holy Mother Immaculate,” conveyed to the holy Doctor the exact meaning which we can attach to them now. But the main idea of an unspotted creature is certainly enshrined in the expression. More intensive thought, and the taking into account of other accepted theological conclusions, lead us to appreciate the appropriation of this saying of the Syrian Saint to our present well-defined dogma. We can have no doubt that if St. Epiphanius had known all the subsequent elucidation of dogma which is now available, he too would have reached

the conclusions of the Vatican Council. The rosebud is not yet the rose, but let it have time, and it will expand into the fully developed flower, so—the germ of a dogma requires time to reach its legitimate development.

If, in the writings of the Fathers and early Doctors we find germs and indications of dogmas (which fully develop in after times), how much more may we expect to find the early indications of important Christian doctrines in that very earliest and overflowing storehouse of Christian teaching which is the New Testament itself. These indications may have been passed over unnoticed and unheeded by generations of readers ; just as, in the Old Testament times, the Jews, in their everyday reading, passed by many events and much teaching, which our LORD subsequently brought to their notice with the well-known interrogation, “Have you not read ?” They had read, of course, but they had never thought out the meaning which was so near the surface, though not aggressively upon it.

For the Gospel of the Feast of the

Immaculate Conception, the Church has chosen some very familiar words from the opening chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. "The angel Gabriel was sent from God" (Luke i. 26).

How, and in what way, can these words have any bearing on the Doctrine which lay dormant in the mind of the Church, to be awakened and brought prominently into notice only after the lapse of many Christian centuries? Yet this Doctrine, like many others, merely followed the normal lines of doctrinal development. These words—"The angel Gabriel was sent from God"—form one of the many passages in the New Testament which are so very familiar, so often read and so often seen that, from very familiarity, they fail to make much impression on us.

Instead of reading, let us study the words, and their doctrinal meaning.

Often as we may have read and heard of the angel Gabriel being sent from God, how seldom may we have thought of the significance of a messenger sent directly by God Himself? As we read in the Bible, and think over what we read, we

must be impressed by the fact that some things are done, so to say, immediately by GOD Himself ; He simply exerts His own inherent power of will. Thus, when GOD said, "Let there be light," at once, there was light. But when He said, "Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and let the waters bring forth the creeping things having life," it was the already prepared earth which brought forth the one, and the existing waters which brought forth the others. In this we see, that some things GOD effects at once, by His own personal, independent action, whereas other things He brings about by using His creatures as His secondary instruments.

In the first chapter of St. Luke we find, written down for our instruction, the means which Almighty GOD took to bring about the Redemption of fallen man. The GOD who said, "Let there be light," and immediately there was light, could just as easily have said, "Let man be redeemed," and man would have been redeemed without any further delay or any further effort. But this short and easy way was not chosen.

Why not? How can we say for certain; this at least we can see, that without the Incarnation mankind would have had no model to imitate, no human example put before us by God, made like to us in all things, sin alone excepted. It was decreed that the Word should be made flesh, and dwell amongst us, and in this passage of St. Luke's Gospel we are told of the first steps taken by God towards the accomplishment of the decree.

The first step was, that God sent a Messenger. It is worth while stopping awhile, to think over the significance of this, that God should select and commission one of His ministering spirits to convey His message. When a great Nation sends an Ambassador to another great Nation, the choice is always made of a distinguished member of the Nation. The angel Gabriel is a distinguished member of the Heavenly hierarchy, of whom mention is made more than once in the Old Testament; he is one of the seven great spirits, who "stand before God": words which imply their rank and their fitness and their readiness to

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carry out the orders of their great Master.

In the book of Daniel (ix. 21) Gabriel foretells to that prophet the time of the coming of the Messiah ; and in this chapter of St. Luke we have Gabriel again as a messenger, and with another message concerning the CHRIST, only in a much more intimate way.

And to whom does this great spirit take a message which must, reasonably, be one worthy of so great a messenger ? Filling up the Gospel narration in our own words, we find that there was a great message entrusted to a great messenger, and we ask, who is the great Personage to whom this great messenger bears his great message ?

It can hardly help coming as a surprise, that this great message is destined for a very lowly person ; a practically unknown maiden, dwelling in an unknown, out-of-the-way corner of an unimportant province. The great messenger takes his message from God into a small town of Galilee, to a virgin espoused to an artisan, a carpenter, named Joseph, and the

Virgin's name was Mary. As every Christian knows, these things are written for our instruction, written, as St. Paul reminds us in his epistle to the Romans (v. 4), "written for our learning," all chosen under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and set down for a lasting remembrance.

Shall we not all agree, that to receive a messenger and a message directly from God, is a very great honour? And we must see that this honour is paid by no less a Person than God Himself.

It was a great honour for Mary to receive such a messenger from God, but what was the message?

What is any message? It is not the mere word of the *bearer* of the message; it is the word of the person who sends the message; Gabriel's message was not really his own, he was but the *bearer* of words put into his mouth by God.

"The angel Gabriel was sent from God," that is, he was sent to give, not his own salutation, but the salutation which he was commissioned to take to Mary from God.

To many people, it never seems to have

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occurred, that God Himself is the author of the first part of our familiar "Hail, Mary." Yet so it is, as Gabriel did not originate, but only faithfully repeated, the message given him to deliver to Mary. It was God's message; and he was not permitted to deviate by one hair's breadth from the substance of the divine communication.

We are accustomed to speak of the "angel's salutation," and so it may be called, but (and it is an important "but") the angel was not the *author* of those words of salutation; he was but the favoured *bearer* of a salutation formulated by the God who sent him. We often say these words, "Hail, Mary, full of grace," without reflecting that we are repeating the words of God Himself, the words which He directed His messenger to use as His salutation. No wonder Catholic piety, which realizes this, has cherished these words which have come from a source so august! In the whole range of God's dealings with mankind there has never been sent a message of such importance!

This is the word, that began for us that world-wide work of Religion and civilization which to-day we know as Christianity. Just as the great oak with its wide-spreading branches springs originally from the insignificant acorn, so the world-wide amelioration of the civilized Christian world, emerges in God's good time, from that message taken from God by the angel Gabriel, to the Virgin whose name was Mary. If we trace back the regeneration of the human race, we find it originates in a message taken to a woman. I use the word "message" rather than any other term, with a good reason.

Let me put it to you in this way. Suppose that a communication was brought to one of us; brought by one whom *we knew* had come from God. If we were not so overwhelmed that we lost our heads, most of us would look upon such a communication as an order, though an order couched in a courteous form; we should esteem it an order, and one to be complied with at once, and without any preliminary questioning. That probably,

and quite reasonably, would be our way.

Strange as it may appear, it was not Mary's way. It is hardly doubtful that she was surprised beyond measure: indeed, we are told that, having "heard, she was troubled at his saying." But if surprised beyond measure and even somewhat alarmed, Mary, if the expression may be allowed, did not lose her head. St. Luke tells us that she thought over the angel's words, and so took time to consider "what manner of salutation this might be."

Even when the angel had further explained to her the full meaning of his words, she would have her mind and conscience fully enlightened before she gave her answer.

"And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done?"

And St. Luke goes on to tell us how the angel explained the purport of his mission. Now, let us give some attention to this and consider some seemingly side issues, which, nevertheless, are of importance. It may seem that while

Mary kept the angel waiting for her answer, while she thought within herself that it was only the angel she kept waiting ; it was merely the messenger who stood expectant, but, if you keep a messenger waiting, necessarily, you also keep waiting *the sender* of the message. Put into plain words, in the instance before us, it comes to this : that GOD, the sender of the message, was willing to wait, till Mary had thought the matter over, and so could give her deliberate acceptance. It was a question of nothing less than the regeneration of Mankind ; surely here, GOD, the sender of the message, had every right to command. He does not command. He waits, till free and well-thought-out consent is given.

What are we to say at this spectacle, where we see (if I may so put it into human language) GOD Himself patiently waiting for a freely given answer. Can we imagine GOD treating any of His creatures with more consideration, we may even say, with more respect ? We must say "respect," for when He could, justly, have commanded, He respects the

freedom He has given to His creatures and will not use arbitrary compulsion even for so great an object as the regeneration of mankind.

All this is recorded in the gospel, for our instruction ; a history of which we could get knowledge in no other way. For our instruction, for we are meant to think over what is so concisely written down, and by our natural equipment of thought and logical reasoning, to unveil all the teaching which is to be found by research, as well as what meets the eye at once and on the surface. One thing stands out with marked prominence. We find GOD Himself treating Mary with marked respect. And yet many who read the New Testament, who read in this chapter of the respect shown to Mary by the Author of the angel's salutation, somehow think they honour GOD by showing ostentatious disrespect to one so respected by GOD Himself ! GOD's words are all imperishable. That is why these words of salutation have been echoed by every Christian generation. This is why these words must be pleasing to GOD,

because they are His own, He it was who *first* said, "Hail, Mary, full of grace." And we can see how much is implied in these words. As GOD foreknew that He would, in the fullness of time, send an angel to Mary to proclaim that before all generations she was in His eyes always full of grace, how natural it was that He should fashion her immaculate ! For what is fullness of grace but the absence of the *stain* of sin ; the absence of that "macula," whereby they who are full of grace are "Immaculate," ever free from the stain of sin, in the sense embodied in the dogma of the "Immaculate Conception."

Using human language, which is the only language we can use, we must say that GOD's words are imperishable, and consequently they are Eternal. The words of GOD are conceived in Eternity, though manifested to us in Time. To the all-seeing eye of GOD, then, Mary was always seen as full of grace ; always without any defilement of sin. And if *always*, then certainly in the *first* moment of her being, no less than at the moment when Gabriel's message reached her won-

dering ears. And here we have stated for us, in other words, the dogma of Mary's "Immaculate Conception," that is, that the beginning of Mary's being was as sinless, as unstained, as was the whole of her subsequent life.

Objections have been raised to this doctrine, on the ground that it is new. New certainly as to its definition, but in germ lying undeveloped just beneath the surface of the words of the Testament, the doctrine is as old as the Gospel itself—indeed, it is older. It is as old as the knowledge of the message ever living in the Divine mind, and one day to be communicated to Mary when, in the fullness of time, by Divine command, the angel saluted her with the human salutation : "Ave Maria, gratia plena."

THE GOLD OF SILENCE

ANY one travelling by rail nowadays will have seen a severe legal notice, calling attention to the necessity of pulling down blinds at nightfall, and so keeping things dark. And more recently, another small square piece of paper, adorned with the Royal Arms, has made its appearance, imploring us also to keep news dark, by being most circumspect in our talk when travelling with chance companions. The wisdom of these precautions is evident: their necessity is sufficiently obvious, with the possibility of hostile ears ready to pick up, at unguarded moments, information otherwise unattainable. And the Nation accepts this Rule of Silence.

A Rule of Silence has always been insisted on by the founders of Religious Orders. The evil consequences of aimless, unguarded, or too free conversations are

only too evident. The atmosphere of thoughtfulness and prayer, which should pervade a house dedicated to God, is rudely shattered by loud, boisterous and senseless noise. And yet silence and the absence of unnecessary noise is not universally beloved, even by those whose lives are to be mostly spent in study, retirement, and prayer. Therefore, taking human nature for what it is, and aiming at what it may be, the founders of Orders always legislated to secure that outward calm, which was to be the reflex of the inward calm, established in the minds and hearts of their followers.

So that we come to have a Rule of Silence in all religious congregations; and yet not the same rule, as different institutions had different conceptions as to how, and how far, and in what degree silence was useful, and compatible with the dissimilar types of life led by the various institutions. Silence of Rule, then, while it might forbid audible speech, might tolerate signs and conventional signals, by which actual reposeful silence might be as effectually broken as by

the loudest talk. The ingenuity which drives a coach and horses through Acts of Parliament, would find no obstacle in wandering at leisure through monastic regulations, and while keeping to the letter of a rule, might make hay with its underlying spirit.

The clear and very practical mind which thought out our constitutions and rules, was aware of all this. A religious silence was essential to the new order as yet in the mould. Silence there should be, and the unspoken word was not to be replaced by any pantomimic substitutes. So a Rule of Silence should be so constructed as to be at once effectual and practicable. In all S.J. houses there should be silence, but understood in this way : it should be defined and definite as to what precisely was aimed at. Not the speechless silence of the Arctic regions, but a silence suitable for human beings having human duties, occupations and needs. Every day, a time, or times, should be set apart expressly for conversation, when all should talk, and so cultivate a natural faculty for relaxation

and education of mind, and for acquiring a facility to say what needed saying, and saying it in the right words. Outside of these set times the Rule of Silence was not rigidly to exclude the spoken word, but the speaker was gently burdened with wise conditions. The S.J. religious may lawfully speak outside the times of general conversation provided that he speaks "obiter," just a passing word, not prolonged to a sustained colloquy. So that his judgment, his tact, as well as his religious obedience are left to his good sense and discretion, and all this is shown by the way in which he, exceptionally, uses the exception left at his disposal.

But there is another condition. Words may be spoken, and the rule yet kept intact, yet he must not be too large in the interpretation of his liberty, so that words are not denied him, while it is left to his honour that they should be as few as possible, "perpaucis."

After mentioning these two quite liberal exceptions, the Common Rule makes a large and comprehensive exception, an exception which allows of speech, yet

keeps the silence of rule when it expressly gives freedom of speech "de rebus necessariis," that is at all times when matters of business require the exchange of words.

Thus times and circumstances of silence are well and wisely provided for ; and then another item is added, when certain places are named as localities where the spoken word should be heard as little as possible, viz. in the Church, the Sacristy (which we may take as the vestibule of the Church), and the Refectory. The manner in which civilized man takes his food is often the mark and stamp of civilization, especially when he takes it in common ; much more then must the Religious take heed as to his manner of satisfying an indispensable human need. The example of his LORD will be the model of his followers in this also, and the meal in common may be Christianized by sobriety, temperance, the curbing of appetite. Orderly silence in the taking of food thus becomes a means of practising Christian virtues, while satisfying that natural craving for food which is the appointed means of continued

animal life. The taking of food in silence may thus become an act of homage to our LORD.

Silence, then, may be made the subject of rules ; but it must not be supposed that with the imposition and observance of a rule the whole *Virtue of Silence* is exhausted. Rules rather narrow down virtues ; they set before us the irreducible minimum while they leave a wide field for a maximum. Leaving the rule, then, as a mere stepping-stone, our attention is drawn to the practice of silence as informed and vitalized by Christian virtues. Besides a silence of rule, silence offers wide scope for the exercise of charity, the silence, let us call it, of charity. The *Rule of Silence* does not tell us that we should never say words that may hurt the feelings of another, much less sting them. Here the *Silence of Charity* comes into being ; when we put ourselves in another's place and thoughtfully refrain from using speech to wound any one. A critical faculty as yet raw and unfledged sees material for gibes and coarse fun in many things that are simply unfamiliar,

and the hoarse laughter of the boor rather betrays his own inferiority, while the man himself is noisily proclaiming his fancied superiority. A modified form of this mistake may exist even in a religious house, till experience (and, above all, the spirit of charity) comes to make them impossible.

But it is not only Charity which may be manifested by silence. A virtue of the first order, the virtue of Prudence, is often shown by a wise silence: as our daily life runs its allotted course, we see many things, we hear many things, as to which silence may prudently be observed; so the *Silence of Prudence* comes to help us in avoiding evil, and, passively, doing much good. Reports passing from one to another are not unlike the small stones rolling down the steep mountain side, insignificant in themselves, yet capable of initiating the avalanche; so too a mordant yet unfair criticism is a lighted match, small itself, yet able to start a widespread conflagration. Now silence, shown by Prudence, leaves the small stone at rest, and does not light the match. Prudent silence checks

fault-finding, by the unauthorized, and thus dries up at its very source a muddy stream which might spread its malodorous waters far and wide. Once more, the silence which is of rule, may branch out into this useful exercise of the cardinal virtue of Prudence.

Its ramifications need not stop here. A wide field lies open to the cultivation of another form of silence, which may be termed the *Silence of Patience*. When we think of the Man of Sorrows, how naturally his patient silence stirs up our sympathy and extorts our admiration! (Matt. xxvi. 61-63; Mark xv. 3-5; Luke xxiii. 8, 9). Here we can do better than admire, we can imitate. We can imitate to such an extent, that we can unobtrusively practise ourselves in unseen acts of the third degree of humility.

The tendency to give outward expression to our feelings, when they are overstrained or deeply wounded, is not only natural, and frequently legitimate enough, but to some temperaments it is imperative. The pent-up stream of emotions, like a river in flood, must either flow outside its

natural channel or violently burst through the retaining banks. Merely to speak of what fills the mind with volcanic thought brings relief, if not calm. And there is no prohibition to seek and utilize this relief. There is no prohibition, but there is an example which we may choose to follow, though absolutely no command to follow has been formulated as a command. There was One, Who when He was reviled did not speak. When accused with shameless misrepresentation, He met all accusation with calm silence. "Answerest thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee? But JESUS held His peace" (Matt. xxvi. 62, 63). Here is a silence, not of any rule, nor demanded by any form of charity or prudence, but left for imitation by those who will. Not to all is this imitation offered, nor is it accepted by all to whom it may be proffered. "Qui potest capere, capiat." Even in a religious house, the accidents of life, and the play of human misunderstandings, from time to time, afford opportunities of this unobserved but almost divine imitation. It is so easy to misread both words and

actions—it is not always imperative that such misunderstanding should be effectually and immediately removed. The right to do this is there; but there are times when one can forgo this right, and elect rather to suffer silently with CHRIST suffering in silence, and suffering unjustly. The imitation of CHRIST cannot be made more perfect than this: yet this imitation is practised by those who, when complaints are brought against them, say nothing in excuse or explanation. So, too, when ill-mannered or detrimental observations are passed upon one's conduct, conduct obviously misunderstood by prejudiced or ill-informed critics, the silence of patience endures without retaliation. When it comes to our knowledge that things are said about us, such things as no one would be callous enough to say to our face, there springs up the natural desire to know, Who said it? Now there is nothing unjust or unchristian in seeking to know the author of such remarks, but it is incomparably more Christlike *not* to inquire. Utilize such an opportunity of practising the silence of patience, an opportunity

which is again presented when curiosity wants to ferret out what precisely is, or has been, said about us. Don't ferret out, don't inquire; and the self-restraint shown in secret by the unnoticed practice of this patient silence will be seen in secret by our Father, who not only sees in secret, but in secret also bestows his ample rewards.

When in our retreats we may ponder over the third degree of humility, and perhaps wonder if an opportunity will ever come to us, of practising virtue so real and so exalted, we may not realize that this great act of virtue may be performed with quite tiny materials: with the commonplace happenings of our daily lives. Take this subject which we are now considering. The rule enjoins a measure of silence. We can improve upon the rule. We can elicit an act, an isolated act it may be, but still stamped with the hall mark of heroism of a kind, which will win everlasting approbation from One whose judgments are just, and whose valuations are true.

These may be the ripe fruit which

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slowly matures, while we are but moderately occupied in tending the garden of our soul. We began by holding our tongues because the Rule of Silence tells us to do that. Then our hardly noticed acts of self-repression (for we checked and commanded ourselves every time we checked the impulse to say an unnecessary word) gradually formed in us the habit of ruling our impulse to give outward expression to each passing sentiment: so we progressed, till we could be masters of our spoken word, and learnt to rule this word with Charity, with Prudence, and often with Christlike patience.

A HELPING HAND

“**I**F thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother” (Matt. xviii. 15). This is part, a kindly part, of our Lord’s doctrine of Christian and fraternal charity. But it is only a part. Christian charity is willing, more than willing, to make efforts as long as there is reasonable hope of success. But Christ teaches no doctrine of useless waste. There is to be no waste of Christian charity, nor of anything else. Where kindly effort is thrown away, sterner methods are provided. “And if he will not hear . . . let him be to thee as the heathen” (v. 17). But anyway, the offer of help comes first.

In the explanatory note which St. Ignatius prefixes to the First Week of his

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Spiritual Exercises, he intimates that these methods have for their object the helping of ourselves to overcome ourselves. We are to overcome ourselves as the indispensable preliminary to the subsequent work of regulating our lives, so that this life of ours may no longer be governed by any impulse or inclination which is "disorderly." Not all inclinations, indeed, or impulses, are to be negatived, but only those which are "out of order." Impulses and inclinations, however, are at best but sandy foundations, and the author of the Spiritual Exercises evidently has a well-founded mistrust of them.

Our impulses, and the failings they entail, are usually much more visible to others than they are to our own not unprejudiced eye. Not being under the sway of our emotions, our friends and acquaintances are calmer and more clear-sighted judges; so St. Ignatius, in his wise efforts to aid us in overcoming our failings, has thoughtfully inserted into our Rules this advice: "Let them take correction from others, as a kindness" (*Reg. Sum.* 10).

We are not to suppose that emotion and impulse have no living values. They have, for emotion and sentiment are ever slumbering on the surface of our lives, ever ready to spring into activity. Their very proximity to the surface, and the velocity with which they respond to appeals made to them, make their importance for the well-being of mankind in the mass. There are generous impulses and legitimate emotions woven into the texture of human life, and inseparable from human nature at its best. We cannot have our nature always at its best, and the sunniest of good qualities is not unaccompanied by the shadow of its defects.

The correcting of faults and failings pre-supposes their discovery. It is here that we need the cool observation of a friendly, wideawake observer. This is the more needed because many faults are not an acquired adjunct : they are natural to us, because they are part of the inherited equipment with which mankind starts at the very threshold of life. Happy the child whose early years are

watched, whose budding failings are cared for as soon as symptoms appear. Like other maladies, it is easier to grapple with faults in the earlier stages, while habit is not yet formed, and the child nature is as yet plastic, and responds readily to outside formative influences. How many hard struggles in after life would have been unnecessary, had some firm and kindly hand nipped betimes the unwelcome bud! What are the faults which a friendly hand may point out to our limited vision?

Deep down in human nature, and with roots spreading in many unsuspected directions, we find a fruitful growth of faults in Pride. This is not only a strongly growing stem itself, but admits of many others being grafted upon it: from it they draw nourishment, when without that parasitic support they would have withered and died a speedy death. Pride may be described as wanting more admiration or more esteem, or, speaking generally, more pre-eminence and distinction beyond our fellow-man, than we have any claim to expect. It is the over-

flowing source whence trickle little rills as well as impetuous torrents. Torrents are easily seen, but the little rills just as easily escape *our* notice. But they attract the eye of the casual wayfarer, and from him we can obtain unsuspected information about things which have ceased to impress themselves upon our inattentive gaze. Pride lurks at the origin of many of our sayings and doings, but it is a blemish we do not want to see, and easily overlook it in a way impossible to a less interested outsider. No failing is corrected by overlooking it; and few can really take the dispassionate view of themselves which they find it so easy to take of others. So in detecting this parent weed in our highly cultivated garden, the eye of a friend or of an enemy can, and usually does, detect many odds and ends invisible at first to our preoccupied vision.

Pride is usually such a visible growth, that it can hardly flourish undetected. But Pride has shabby relations, who keep in the background, and do not care to be too prominent. But they influence our conduct even though we hardly admit

their existence ; from very familiarity, their presence and their subdued asides whispered assiduously into our ears, seem part of our everyday lives, and almost unconsciously we follow out their whisperings. Are we yielding to pride ? No ! no ! nothing so glaring as that ! but our eye fails to see the varnish of vainglory which has, somehow, got spread over very ordinary work, and the thin varnish looks to us like highly polished work, because, after all, it is *our* work. Here again, the disinterested critic can take a less partial view, and his criticism points out the feet of clay which we would not look at in our little statue. So the glory we rather fancied was our due, after all, is only vain-glory, for it is founded mostly on the brittle foundation of our self-esteem, an esteem which has no existence outside of ourselves. But we needed some one, other than ourselves, to bring this really quite evident fact home to us. When our rule comes into action, this is done in a kindly way, which spares us much wounded feeling in the future at a little cost now in the present.

No one cares to admit, even to himself, that he is vainglorious, as vainglory is such a silly defect in itself. But vainglory is the starting-point of many semi-concealed defects of character, which may lead to real moral catastrophes in the more or less distant future. This is a danger that comes to men living somewhat apart from their fellows, men who may be called upon to act on their own initiative at not infrequent intervals. Many such decisions are taken with happy results, and so a man grows insensibly to take for granted that *all* his decisions must be equally successful, and so he, with equal insensibility as to what is simmering in his mind, takes it for granted that his outlook is superior and more far-reaching, at least in better taste, than that of other men. And it is not until the other men get in a word, that his self-complacency receives a well-merited shock. When such a shock arrives, then the warning of St. Ignatius is badly needed; and it needs no small measure of real virtue to stand the shock unmoved.

If the little seeds of vainglory are allowed to germinate, they will not grow up quite alone. Vainglory is not a stay-at-home failing; it likes to take its walks abroad accompanied by its faithful attendant, Boastfulness. Vainglory might dwell hidden beyond the veil of ordinary life, did not the unquiet spirit of Boastfulness chafe at the want of recognition suffered by its shoddy wares. So Boastfulness is ready to take its stand on any and every coign of vantage, and lifts its thin, piping voice to catch, if it can, the admiring notice of the passer-by.

One would naturally think that such failings, though necessarily small (as are all the defects we are now dealing with), have their being for the most part in small matters, and would jar on the sense of propriety, on the sense of the fitness of things, present in most educated minds. No doubt they would, if everybody at all times quite clearly realized the remote springs of action which work automatically in agreement with our natural or acquired character. But experience tells us that they do not. We are ourselves,

and look at things from our centre of the world. Is not this a worldwide experience, and has not Scotland's poet but voiced a well-nigh universal aspiration, when he exclaimed :

“ Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see oursel's as others see us.”

What Burns asked for, St. Ignatius has given ; and those to whom it is given are not always enthusiastic, wholehearted and deeply grateful for the gift : as little grateful as, perhaps, Burns himself might have been, had some power obligingly then and there granted his request.

There is another failing which is met by this advice of the Saint ; a failing also liable to spring up in men of action, men in whose minds natural qualities have not been left undeveloped by study, but study rather too much running in the one groove.

It would not be so difficult for us to cast out Pride and Vainglory and their progeny from our hearth and home, if they were not usually accompanied by a very sturdy ally, in the shape of a spirit of Obstinacy. The proud man vain-

gloriously mistakes his obstinacy for manly firmness of character. But the man who is blessed with a firm character, is quite willing to listen to reasons, to weigh reasons, and to be influenced by just reasons. The merely obstinate man will not listen, will not weigh fairly, will not give in to any person or reason whatever. His own decision, just because it is his own, must override all that can possibly be brought against it. Obstinacy is therefore not uncommonly unrecognized pride ; not recognized, that is, by the victim himself, but clearly detected by others as naked pride, or sometimes with a decent-looking garment partly thrown over it to cloak its unhandsome deshabelle. However much draped in ample but ill-fitting robes, obstinacy is almost always pride in masquerade. It wants a bold and a firm hand to tear off this masquerade, and few men have such firmness towards themselves, even supposing that they have detected the borrowed garments. Most often it needs the humiliation that comes from the unobscured vision of some one else, before the dead wall of

obstinacy can be effectually levelled, so that real virtue may find a pathway through and beyond.

When men live in communities, social or religious, it is of the utmost importance that peace and harmony should reign amongst them, and that all should co-operate to this end. The defects of the individual thus become of public importance, and every one is interested in eliminating such personal defects as spoil the harmony of the body public. The obstinate man may not intend it, but too often he is the cause of discord. He wants everybody to be on his side ; every one is to see with his eyes, and he is not always scrupulously fair in the means of persuasion he adopts. He will contradict freely, though he is himself notoriously impatient of contradiction ; and so fire and steel soon clash, and wake up the sparks of Discord. No one can foresee where these sparks, like others, may fall, and what, or how much, they may set on fire. To extinguish, or still better, to prevent, such conflagrations, is everybody's business. The general well-

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being demands this, so every one must co-operate in stifling the early origin as soon as it is noticed. So St. Ignatius makes his appeal to all—

“Let all think it well.”
(*Bene omnes consultant.*)

It is every one's interest that is imperilled by the fault of one, so all should combine to eradicate the personal failings which may easily turn into public misfortunes. A public body, no less than an individual, is affected by the sanity of parts. The duty of correction which seems at first such a personal and individual matter, becomes one that affects, or may affect, the welfare of all. Consequently the advice given is not framed solely for the emendation of one marked individual (though this is what is aimed at primarily), but it reaches a higher level when possible ramifications of that individual's shortcomings have to be taken into consideration. We know how readily the world at large judges all by the solitary specimen they have casually encountered. Each and all of us unavoid-

ably bear with us the honour, the fair fame, of the whole body. It is not unreasonable for the whole body, collectively, to watch and, collectively, to improve out of their body, the failings which obtrude themselves on their notice and attract the notice of others. A regiment, if hints and other methods fail, often does this eliminating by the ready, if rough, expedient of "ragging." A public body has an inherent right to protect itself against unsociable persons, or discordant mannerisms. In organized societies, even in those whose aims are religious, the individual has ordinarily to sacrifice something of his own individuality to the common welfare.

Christianity points out what a person must eliminate, and points it out gently. But Christianity does not forget that in the Temple precincts Christ handled a whip with conspicuous success,

THE END

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